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THE LE GALLIENNE BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

THE LE GALLIENNE BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

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NEW YORK
BONI & LIVERIGHT
PUBLISHERS

THE LE GALLIENNE BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

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First Printing, October, 1925
Second Printing, December, 1925

Printed in the United States of America

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to make grateful acknowledgment to the many publishers who have granted me permission to include in this Anthology the poems I have selected to represent the course of American poetry—so specifically my acknowledgment is due to

D. Appleton & Co. for the privilege of including "De Big Bethel Church" by Joel Chandler Harris.

Barse & Hopkins for the use of "The Song of the Soldier-Born," selected from the poems of Robert W. Service.

The Bobbs-Merrill Co. for "A Life Lesson," "Bereaved," and "A Parting Guest" by James Whitcomb Riley.

W. B. Conkey Company for "Solitude," written by Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Dodd, Mead & Company for "Discovered" and "Compensation" by Paul Laurence Dunbar; Robert Munger's "The Derelict," taken from his volume, "The Land of Lost Music."

George H. Doran Company for their kind permission to include "To a Photographer" from "Songs of a Workaday World" by Berton Braley; the following selections from poems by Joyce Kilmer: "Trees" and "Old Poets" from the volume "Trees and Other Poems," as well as "Ballade of My Lady's Beauty," "Wealth," and "Dave Lilly"; "To a Post-Office Inkwell" by Christopher Morley, and taken from his book entitled "Rocking Horse"; "Peregrine" and "Let No Charitable Hope" by Elinor Wylie, included in the volume "Black Armour"; "When Amaryllis Bowls" and "Magic" from "The Middle Twenties" by John Farrar.

Doubleday, Page & Co. for the use of five selections from the poems of Don Marquis and "The Rich Man" from the volume "Tobogganing on Parnassus" by Franklin P. Adams.

Duffield & Co. for granting the use of "The Frozen Grail" by Elsa Barker.

E. P. Dutton & Co. for "A Chant of Love for England" written by Helen Gray Cone.

Forbes Publishing Co. for "If I Should Die Tonight" by Ben King.

Harcourt, Brace & Co. for reprint permission on "The Mother" and "Mia Carlotta" from the volume "Carmina"

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by T. A. Daly; two selections, "Landscapes" and "Caliban in the Coal Mines," from Louis Untermeyer's book entitled "Challenge."

Harper & Brothers for permitting the reprinting of "Out of the Old House, Nancy" from "Farm Ballads" by Will Carleton; one selection from the poetry of Guy Wetmore Carryl; for "Elaine" and "Lament" from "Second April," copyright 1921, and "Afternoon on a Hill" from "Renascence," copyright 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Harr Wagner Publishing Co. for five poems from the work of Joaquin Miller. (Publishers of the Complete Works of Joaquin Miller.)

Henry Holt & Company for the use of "The Factories" from the volume "Factories" and "Remembrance: Greek Folk-Song" by Margaret Widdemer; Lew Sarett's "Leave Me To My Own" from "Box of God"; an extract from "Death-Chant of the Centaurs" included in the volume "Heavens and Earth" by Stephen Vincent Benét; "After Apple-Picking," "The Road Not Taken," and "Birches," selected from the poems of Robert Frost; Carl Sandburg's "Chicago," "At A Window," and "Joy."

Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to reprint one selection from the work of William Dean Howells; "Tears of the Poplars" and "The Quiet Pilgrim" by Edith M. Thomas; two poems by Richard Watson Gilder; "The Monk in the Kitchen" and "Grieve Not, Ladies" by Anna Hempstead Branch; "Robinson Crusoe's Story" written by Charles Edward Carryl; "Tryste Noël" and "Of Joan's Youth" by Louise Imogen Guiney; by William Vaughn Moody: "In New York" and "At Assisi" from "Song-Flower and Poppy," and "Heart's Wild-Flower"; "Anticipation" and "A Gift" by Amy Lowell; Grace Fallow Norton's "O Sleep"; poems from the volume "Preludes and Symphonies" by John Gould Fletcher; "Jim Bludso" written by John Hay; "Waiting" by John Burroughs; Edmund Clarence Stedman's "Pan in Wall Street"; "Heredity" by Thomas Bailey Aldrich; "The Singing Man" written by Josephine Preston Peabody; Edward Rowland Sill's "The Fool's Prayer"; "To a Rose" by Frank Dempster Sherman; "Radiant Loss" and "Debt" written by Jessie Rittenhouse.

B. W. Huebsch for the use of "Sinfonia Domestica" by Jean Starr Untermeyer; a selection from "The Ghetto" by Lola Ridge.

Mitchell Kennerley for the right to include "To A Tawny Thrush" and "At the Aquarium" by Max Eastman; Arthur Davison Ficke's poems, "To an Old Friend," from "Sonnets of a Portrait-Painter," and "The Three Sis-

ters"; "Be in Me as the Eternal Moods" and "Piccadilly" by Ezra Pound.

Alfred A. Knopf for the reprint of "Dirge" and "The Lonely Death" from the writings of Adelaide Crapsey; "The Mystic" from "Grenstone Poems" and an extract from "The New World" which he published for Witter Bynner; selected poems from the work of James Oppenheim; "Old Manuscript" from Alfred Kreymborg's volume "Mushroom"; Ezra Pound's "Ortus" and "The Ballad of the Goodly Fere"; "Completion" and "Parting After A Quarrel" from "Body and Raiment" by Eunice Tietjens.

Little, Brown & Co. for selections from the poetry of Emily Dickinson; "Poppies in the Wheat" and "Habeas Corpus" by Helen Hunt Jackson; three poems by Louise Chandler Moulton.

The Macmillan Company for permission to reproduce from "The Congo" by Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, also "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," "The Eagle That Is Forgotten," and "The Flower of Mending"; "April Theology" from "The Quest" by John G. Neihardt; Louis V. Ledoux's "Hymn to Demeter," taken from "The Story of Eleusis"; "Before Dawn in the Woods" from "Bluestone" by Marguerite Wilkinson; three selected poems from the work of Sara Teasdale: "The Flight" and "The Debt" from "Love Songs," as well as "The Answer" from "Rivers to the Sea"; Padraic Colum's "River-Mates" and "The Sea Bird to the Wave" from "Wild Earth"; six selected poems from the "New Spoon River Anthology" by Edgar Lee Masters; Charles L. O'Donnell's "Forgiveness" and "The Poet's Bread"; "The Sky-Goer" and "North Star" by Zona Gale.

Moffat, Yard & Co. for the use of "Song" by Haniel Long, taken from his volume entitled "Poems."

Thomas B. Mosher for his permission to use "Evoe" from the volume "The Flower from the Ashes" by Edith M. Thomas; three poems selected from the work of Lizette Woodworth Reese; "Sometimes" and "From the Hills" by Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

The New York Evening Sun for permission to include "Old Garrets" and "The Puddle" by Moris Abel Beer.

Oxford University Press and to Mr. Houston Mifflin for permission to include three selected poems by Lloyd Mifflin.

Poetry (Chicago) for permission to use "Sweetgrass Range" written by Edwin Ford Piper.

G. P. Putnam's Sons for "The Four Winds" taken from Sara Teasdale's volume entitled "Helen of Troy."

Grant Richards, Ltd. (London), for granting permission to

reprint selections from "The Interpretations" written by Zoë Akins.

Charles Scribner's Sons for reprint in this volume of "Luke Havergal," "Miniver Cheevy," and "The Master," by Edwin Arlington Robinson; an extract from "The Divine Phantasy" published by them for John Hall Wheelock; three Sidney Lanier poems: "The Marshes of Glynn," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," and "Evening Song"; Eugene Field's "The Lyttel Boy," "Wynken, Blynken and Nod," and "Little Boy Blue"; "An Angler's Wish" by Henry van Dyke; two selected poems by Henry Cuyler Bunner: "Behold the Deeds" and "A Pitcher of Mignonette"; "I Have a Rendezvous With Death" by Alan Seeger; "Geese" and "The Mon-Goos" from "Child's Natural History" written by Oliver Herford.

Thomas Seltzer for permission to reprint "Candle Light" and "To a Certain Lady" by John Cowper Powys.

Small, Maynard & Company for the use of several selections from the poems of John Banister Tabb; "The Rain-Crow" written by Madison Cawein.

Acknowledgments are also due to these authors who have kindly allowed their work to be included:

Morris Abel Beer, "Old Garrets" and "The Puddle."

Wm. Rose Benét, "The Falconer of God."

Maxwell Bodenheim, "Old Jew," "To a Friend," "Advice to a Buttercup."

Alice Brown, "Cloistered" and "West-Country Lover."

Gelett Burgess, "Purple Cow."

Richard Burton, "City of the Dead."

Willa Sibert Cather, "The Palatine."

Robert W. Chambers, "The Recruit."

Arthur Colton, "To Faustine."

Padraic Colum, "River-Mates" and "The Sea Bird to the Wave" from "Wild Earth."

Olive Tilford Dargan, four selections from "The Cycle's Rim."

Mary Carolyn Davies, "The Day Before April" and "Cloistered."

Maurice Francis Egan, "Maurice de Guérin."

Theodosia Garrison, "Stains."

Hermann Hagedorn, "Departure."

Maurice Hanline, "A Song of Pierrot."

Robert Underwood Johnson, "The Wistful Days."

Harry Kemp, "Prithee, Strive Not" and "The Conquerors."

Louis V. Ledoux, "Hymn to Demeter" from "The Story of Eleusis."

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, selections from "The Congo" and other poems.
Percy Mackaye, "The Automobile" and "France."
Edwin Markham, "The Man with the Hoe," "Lincoln, the Man of the People," and "A Look into the Gulf."
Edgar Lee Masters, selections from "New Spoon River Anthology" and other poems.
Ada Foster Murray, "The Shadowed Star," "Her Dwelling Place," "The One Who Stayed," and "When You Came."
John G. Neihardt, "April Theology" from "The Quest."
Rose O'Neill, "Faun-Taken" and "Love-Ending."
Walter Adolphe Roberts, "Villanelle of the Living Pan."
George Santayana, "As in the Midst of Battle" and "What Riches Have You?"
Clinton Scollard, "As I Came Down from Lebanon."
Vincent Starrett, "Dancer" and "Villon Strolls at Midnight."
George Sterling, "Omnia Exeunt in Mysterium," "The Black Vulture," and "A Legend of the Dove."
Arthur Stringer, "You Bid Me to Sleep."
Sara Teasdale, one poem from "Helen of Troy," two from "Love Songs," and one from "Rivers to the Sea."
Ridgely Torrence, "The Singers in a Cloud" and "Evensong."
Charles Hanson Towne, "Baboon" and "Of One Self-Slain."
George Sylvester Viereck, "The Candle and the Flame."
John Hall Wheelock, "Pitiless Beauty."
George E. Woodberry, "At Gibraltar."

And to
Louis Loveman for kind permission to use "April Rain" by his brother, the late Robert Loveman.

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INTRODUCTION

In the making of a collection of this kind poetic excellence cannot be the only consideration. Along with the best must be included no little of the worst—from the artistic standpoint. The representative poetry of all nations includes both. Some verse, however bad, by its chronological position, its historical associations, its mere popularity, has its place in all such national anthologies. Such books are not for the supercilious, but no good critic is ever supercilious. Whatever his personal predilections, the true critic finds nothing that is human foreign to him, realising that in literature too it takes all kinds to make a world. Any poetry, however "homely," sentimental, or provincial, that has won the ear of a people, or touched its heart, has its place i' the story, in the case of such a popular collection as this aims to be. Therefore, no popular "favourite," however chap-fallen, or outmoded, has been consciously omitted from this "Book of American Verse," which attempts to illustrate the whole course of American poetry in dull periods as well as in bright, and as represented by real poets as well as by men and women who were often but commonplace versifiers, accidentally and temporarily "famous." On the whole, however, I believe that little will be found included here which will not have some quality of poetical entertainment for the humane, sympathetic reader—associative value at least.

There are four American poets that are also world-poets: Emerson, Longfellow, Poe, Walt Whitman, and to these should, I think, be added Bret Harte. These, with the exception of Poe, are also the most distinctively American. Poe belongs to the Palace of Art. He might have been born anywhere; but the others could hardly have come out of any other country but America. The originality of Emerson is not perhaps sufficiently appreciated. The spiritual element in Whitman's broader, grosser, more specificially national genius, comes largely from Emerson, as from Whitman has come the new energy, the revolutionary freedom, which vitalizes all modern poetry written in the English language. Though our recent renaissance of poetry has produced no great poet, there is in it a breath of new life, felt as an animating quality in the work of the smallest modern poet that is a poet at all—and that breath comes from Walt Whitman. He is pre-eminently the poet of the modern world.

With many, to appreciate Whitman and Poe is to belittle Longfellow. But this, of course, is merely stupid. Contemporary taste runs so narrowly towards the intellectual, the bizarre, and the perverse, that it is bored with anything wholesome and homely. The modern reader of poetry is too much of an absinthe-drinker, turning up his nose at honest beer. But, indeed, Longfellow's verse has not infrequently the quality of a delicate light wine. It is far from being without charm, and occasionally, indeed, achieves magic. It is also pervaded with unobtrusive culture and a fine humanism. As a balladist, idyllist and lyrist, Longfellow had considerable gifts, and Amer-

ica is in his debt for two great services. In *Hiawatha, Evangeline,* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish,* he has written the legend of American history with something of epic breadth, and his poetry generally is filled with gentle entertainment of great variety, which has still its attractiveness for those who do not conceive of poetry as inspired only by erotomania and delirium tremens. Longfellow's other service to his countrymen was in his being a bridge between them and European literature, particularly Spanish and Italian, and in the satisfaction he brought them for that general homesickness for European life and culture, which is still an American characteristic. To Bret Harte we owe not merely his own, which still remains the best, but all succeeding poetry written in American dialect and story, and embodying that humour which all the world regards as peculiarly American. Of other distinctively American poets that are not world-poets too, I am sorry for the man who cannot appreciate the cosmic nature-love of Bryant, or the homely, rugged piety of Whittier, or the learned, philosophic muses of such scholarly poets as T. W. Parsons and Richard Henry Stoddard, as well as the sweeping harmonies of Lanier, and the fantasy and delicate art of Aldrich. For the rest of the vast multitude of variously gifted singers gathered here, one has but to glance down the "Contents" pages to be struck by the immense number of clever, and even brilliant and beautiful things that even the "minor poets" of "these States" have produced. The humorous poets are particularly good and numerous, but there is many a lovely lyric too, many striking expressions of the

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joy and sorrow and beauty of life, deep-rooted in humanity, and done with a fine artistry. In love-poetry and nature-poetry alike this volume is rich. But to discriminate amongst its contents would pass the bounds of this brief preface. Much will be already known to many readers, and those to whom the extent and variety of American poetry is yet to be discovered will, I think, be surprised at the gamut of themes spanned in this volume, and the many modes of skilful execution. As for the more recent poets, I am in the hopes that my selections from them will be sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate, what is well-known to their unprejudiced readers, that contemporary American poetry is at present the most vital and original being written in the English tongue. For the moment, at all events, it looks as though the future of English poetry is to be in America. The tremendous, eager, wide-spread interest in poetry which has spread like wild-fire over the country during the last ten years, seems in itself to be something of a portent. However we may laugh at the veritable jungle-growth of Poetry Societies, they are an encouraging sign. And I couldn't help smiling just now, as I glanced at Professor Woodberry's article on "American Literature" in the eleventh edition of "The Encyclopedia Britannica" (published 1910-11) and read his conclusion. "The imaginative life is feeble," he says, "and when felt is crude"; and then he adds, "The poet's pulse is imperceptible." That, you see, was fifteen years ago. Professor Woodberry could hardly find "the poetic pulse" imperceptible now.

In making this collection I have gratefully to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Stedman's well-known anthology, as well as to Mr. Burton Stevenson's vast thesaurus, "The Home-Book of Verse."

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

THE LE GALLIENNE BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

THE MODERN BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832)

From "Female Frailty"

Song of Thyrsis

The turtle on yon withered bough,
That lately mourned her murdered mate,
Has found another comrade now—
Such changes all await!
Again her drooping plume is drest,
Again she's willing to be blest
And takes her lover to her nest.
If nature has decreed it so
With all above, and all below,
Let us like them forget our woe,
And not be killed with sorrow.
If I should quit your arms to-night
And chance to die before 'twas light—
I would advise you—and you might—
Love again to-morrow.

The Wild Honeysuckle

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom;
They died—nor were those flowers more gay,

The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
Unpitying frosts and Autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came;
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower.

The Parting Glass

The man that joins in life's career
And hopes to find some comfort here,
To rise above this earthly mass,—
The only way's to drink his glass.

But still, on this uncertain stage
Where hopes and fears the soul engage,
And while, amid the joyous band,
Unheeded flows the measured sand,
Forget not as the moments pass
That time shall bring the parting glass!

In spite of all the mirth I've heard,
This is the glass I always feared,
The glass that would the rest destroy,
The farewell cup, the close of joy.

With you, whom reason taught to think,
I could for ages sit and drink;
But with the fool, the sot, the ass,
I haste to take the parting glass.

The luckless wight, that still delays
His draught of joys to future days,
Delays too long—for then, alas!
Old age steps up, and—breaks the glass!

The nymph who boasts no borrowed charms,
Whose sprightly wit my fancy warms,—
What though she tends this country inn,
And mixes wine, and deals out gin?
With such a kind, obliging lass,
I sigh to take the parting glass.

With him who always talks of gain
(Dull Momus, of the plodding train),
The wretch who thrives by others' woes,
And carries grief where'er he goes,—
With people of this knavish class
The first is still my parting glass.

With those that drink before they dine,
With him that apes the grunting swine,
Who fills his page with low abuse,
And strives to act the gabbling goose
Turned out by fate to feed on grass—
Boy, give me quick the parting glass.

The man whose friendship is sincere,
Who knows no guilt, and feels no fear,—
It would require a heart of brass
With him to take the parting glass.

With him who quaffs his pot of ale,
Who holds to all an even scale,
Who hates a knave in each disguise,
And fears him not—whate'er his size—
With him, well pleased my days to pass,
May heaven forbid the Parting Glass!

To a Honey Bee

Thou, born to sip the lake or spring,
Or quaff the waters of the stream,
Why hither come, on vagrant wing?
Does Bacchus tempting seem,—
Did he for you this glass prepare?
Will I admit you to a share?

Did storms harass or foes perplex,
Did wasps or king-birds bring dismay,—
Did wars distress, or labors vex,
Or did you miss your way?
A better seat you could not take
Than on the margin of this lake.

Welcome!—I hail you to my glass:
All welcome here you find;
Here let the cloud of trouble pass,
Here be all care resigned.
This fluid never fails to please,
And drown the griefs of men or bees.

What forced you here we cannot know,
And you will scarcely tell,
But cheery we would have you go
And bid a glad farewell:
On lighter wings we bid you fly,—
Your dart will now all foes defy.

Yet take not, oh! too deep a drink,
And in this ocean die;
Here bigger bees than you might sink,
Even bees full six feet high.
Like Pharaoh, then, you would be said
To perish in a sea of red.

Do as you please, your will is mine;
Enjoy it without fear,
And your grave will be this glass of wine,
Your epitaph—a tear;
Go, take your seat in Charon's boat;
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The Yankee Man-of-War

'Tis of a gallant Yankee ship that flew the Stripes and Stars,
And the whistling wind from the west-nor'-west blew through the pitch-pine spars;
With her starboard tacks aboard, my boys, she hung upon the gale;
Of an autumn night we raised the light on the old Head of Kinsale.

It was a clear and cloudless night, and the wind blew steady and strong,
As gayly over the sparkling deep our good ship bowled along;
With the foaming seas beneath her bow the fiery waves she spread,
And bending low her bosom of snow, she buried her lee cathead.

There was no talk of short'ning sail by him who walked the poop,
And under the press of her pond'ring jib, the boom bent like a hoop!
And the groaning water-ways told the strain that held her stout main-tack,
But he only laughed as he glanced aloft at a white and silvery track.

The mid-tide meets in the Channel waves that flow from shore to shore.
And the mist hung heavy upon the land from Featherstone to Dunmore.
And that sterling light in Tusker Rock where the old bell tolls each hour,
And the beacon light that shone so bright was quench'd on Waterford Tower.

The mighty ropes our good ship wore were her whole top-sails three,
Her spanker and her standing jib—the courses being free,
"Now, lay aloft! my heroes bold, not a moment must be passed!"
And royals and top-gallant sails were quickly on each mast.

What looms upon our starboard bow? What hangs upon the breeze?
'Tis time our good ship hauled her wind abreast the old Saltees,
For by her ponderous press of sail and by her consorts four
We saw our morning visitor was a British man-of-war.

Up spake our noble Captain then, as a shot ahead of us past—
"Haul snug your flowing courses! lay your topsail to the mast!"
Those Englishmen gave three loud hurrahs from the deck of their covered ark,
And we answered back by a solid broadside from the decks of our patriot bark.

"Out booms! out booms!" our skipper cried, "out booms and give her sheet,"
And the swiftest keel that was ever launched shot ahead of the British fleet,
And amidst a thundering shower of shot, with stun'-sails hoisting away,
Down the North Channel Paul Jones did steer just at the break of day.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT (1752-1817)

The Smooth Divine

There smiled the smooth Divine, unused to wound
The sinner's heart with hell's alarming sound.
No terrors on his gentle tongue attend;
No grating truths the nicest ear offend.

That strange new-birth, that methodistic grace,
Nor in his heart nor sermons found a place.
Plato's fine tales he clumsily retold,
Trite, fireside, moral seesaws, dull as old,—
His Christ and Bible placed at good remove,
Guilt hell-deserving, and forgiving love.
'Twas best, he said, mankind should cease to sin:
Good fame required it; so did peace within.
Their honors, well he knew, would ne'er be driven;
But hoped they still would please to go to heaven.
Each week he paid his visitation dues;
Coaxed, jested, laughed; rehearsed the private news;
Smoked with each goody, thought her cheese excelled;
Her pipe he lighted, and her baby held.
Or placed in some great town, with lacquered shoes,
Trim wig, and trimmer gown, and glistening hose,
He bowed, talked politics, learned manners mild,
Most meekly questioned, and most smoothly smiled;
At rich men's jests laughed loud, their stories praised,
Their wives' new patterns gazed, and gazed, and gazed;
Most daintily on pampered turkeys dined,
Nor shrunk with fasting, nor with study pined:
Yet from their churches saw his brethren driven,
Who thundered truth, and spoke the voice of heaven,
Chilled trembling guilt in Satan's headlong path,
Charmed the feet back, and roused the ear of death.
"Let fools," he cried, "starve on, while prudent I
Snug in my nest shall live, and snug shall die."

ST. GEORGE TUCKER (1752-1828)

Days of My Youth

Days of my youth,
    Ye have glided away;
Hairs of my youth,
    Ye are frosted and gray;
Eyes of my youth,
    Your keen sight is no more;
Cheeks of my youth,
    Ye are furrowed all o'er;
Strength of my youth,
    All your vigor is gone;
Thoughts of my youth,
    Your gay visions are flown.
Days of my youth,
    I wish not your recall;

Hairs of my youth,
I'm content ye should fall;
Eyes of my youth,
You much evil have seen;
Cheeks of my youth,
Bathed in tears have you been;
Thoughts of my youth,
You have led me astray;
Strength of my youth,
Why lament your decay?

Days of my age,
Ye will shortly be past;
Pains of my age,
Yet awhile ye can last;
Joys of my age,
In true wisdom delight;
Eyes of my age,
Be religion your light;
Thoughts of my age,
Dread ye not the cold sod;
Hopes of my age,
Be ye fixed on your God.

ALEXANDER WILSON (1766-1813)

The Fisherman's Hymn

The osprey sails above the sound,
The geese are gone, the gulls are flying;
The herring shoals swarm thick around,
The nets are launched, the boats are plying;
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Raise high the song, and cheerily wish her,
Still as the bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

She brings us fish—she brings us spring,
Good times, fair weather, warmth, and plenty,
Fine stores of shad, trout, herring, ling,
Sheepshead and drum, and old-wives dainty.
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Ply every oar, and cheerily wish her,
Still as the bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

She rears her young on yonder tree,
She leaves her faithful mate to mind 'em;

Like us, for fish, she sails to sea,
And, plunging, shows us where to find 'em.
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Ply every oar, and cheerily wish her,
While the slow bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

JOSEPH HOPKINSON (1770-1842)

Hail, Columbia!

Hail, Columbia! happy land!
Hail, ye heroes! heaven-born band!
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
And when the storm of war was gone,
Enjoyed the peace your valor won.
Let independence be our boast,
Ever mindful what it cost;
Ever grateful for the prize,
Let its altar reach the skies.

Firm, united, let us be,
Rallying round our Liberty;
As a band of brothers joined,
Peace and safety we shall find.

Immortal patriots! rise once more:
Defend your rights, defend your shore:
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Invade the shrine where sacred lies
Of toil and blood the well-earned prize.
While offering peace sincere and just,
In Heaven we place a manly trust,
That truth and justice will prevail,
And every scheme of bondage fail.

Firm, united, etc.

Sound, sound, the trump of Fame!
Let WASHINGTON'S great name
Ring through the world with loud applause,
Ring through the world with loud applause;
Let every clime to Freedom dear,
Listen with a joyful ear.
With equal skill, and godlike power,
He governed in the fearful hour

Of horrid war; or guides, with ease,
The happier times of honest peace.

Firm, united, etc.

Behold the chief who now commands,
Once more to serve his country, stands—
The rock on which the storm will beat,
The rock on which the storm will beat;
But, armed in virtue firm and true,
His hopes are fixed on Heaven and you.
When hope was sinking in dismay,
And glooms obscured Columbia's day,
His steady mind, from changes free,
Resolved on death or liberty.

Firm, united, let us be,
Rallying round our Liberty;
As a band of brothers joined,
Peace and safety we shall find.

JAMES KIRKE PAULDING (1779-1860)

The Old Man's Carousal

Drink! drink! to whom shall we drink?
To a friend or a mistress? Come, let me think!
To those who are absent, or those who are here?
To the dead that we loved, or the living still dear?
Alas! when I look, I find none of the last!
The present is barren,—let's drink to the past!

Come! here's to the girl with a voice sweet and low,
The eye all of fire and the bosom of snow,
Who erewhile, in the days of my youth that are fled,
Once slept on my bosom, and pillowed my head!
Would you know where to find such a delicate prize?
Go seek in yon church-yard, for there she lies.

And here's to the friend, the one friend of my youth,
With a head full of genius, a heart full of truth,
Who traveled with me in the sunshine of life,
And stood by my side in its peace and its strife!
Would you know where to seek for a blessing so rare?
Go drag the lone sea, you may find him there.

And here's to a brace of twin cherubs of mine,
With hearts like their mother's, as pure as this wine,

Who came but to see the first act of the play,
Grew tired of the scene, and then both went away.
Would you know where this brace of bright cherubs have hied?
Go seek them in heaven, for there they abide.

A bumper, my boys! to a gray-headed pair,
Who watched o'er my childhood with tenderest care.
God bless them, and keep them, and may they look down
On the head of their son, without tear, sigh, or frown!
Would you know whom I drink to? go seek 'mid the dead,
You will find both their names on the stone at their head.

And here's—but alas! the good wine is no more,
The bottle is emptied of all its bright store;
Like those we have toasted, its spirit is fled,
And nothing is left of the light that it shed.
Then, a bumper of tears, boys! the banquet here ends.
With a health to our dead, since we've no living friends.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON (1779-1843)

America to Great Britain

All hail! thou noble land,
Our Father's native soil!
Oh, stretch thy mighty hand,
Gigantic grown by toil,
O'er the vast Atlantic wave to our shore!
For thou with magic might
Canst reach to where the light
Of Phœbus travels bright
The world o'er!

The Genius of our clime,
From his pine-embattled steep,
Shall hail the guest sublime;
While the Tritons of the deep
With their conchs the kindred league shall proclaim.
Then let the world combine,—
O'er the main our naval line
Like the milky-way shall shine
Bright in fame!

Though ages long have past
Since our Fathers left their home,
Their pilot in the blast,
O'er untravelled seas to roam,
Yet lives the blood of England in our veins!

And shall we not proclaim
That blood of honest fame
Which no tyranny can tame
By its chains?

While the language free and bold
Which the bard of Avon sung,
In which our Milton told
How the vault of heaven rung
When Satan, blasted, fell with his host;—
While this, with reverence meet,
Ten thousand echoes greet,
From rock to rock repeat
Round our coast;—

While the manners, while the arts,
That mould a nation's soul,
Still cling around our hearts,—
Between let Ocean roll,
Our joint communion breaking with the Sun:
Yet still from either beach
The voice of blood shall reach,
More audible than speech,
"We are One."

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY (1780-1843)

The Star-Spangled Banner

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion

A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—*"In God is our trust"*:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

DANIEL WEBSTER (1782-1852)

On the Death of My Son Charles

My son, thou wast my heart's delight,
Thy morn of life was gay and cheery;
That morn has rushed to sudden night,
Thy father's house is sad and dreary.

I held thee on my knee, my son!
And kissed thee laughing, kissed thee weeping;
But ah! thy little day is done,
Thou'rt with thy angel sister sleeping.

The staff, on which my years should lean,
Is broken, ere those years come o'er me;
My funeral rites thou shouldst have seen,
But thou art in the tomb before me.

Thou rear'st to me no filial stone,
No parent's grave with tears beholdest;
Thou art my ancestor, my son!
And stand'st in Heaven's account the oldest.

On earth my lot was soonest cast,
Thy generation after mine,
Thou hast thy predecessor past;
Earlier eternity is thine.

I should have set before thine eyes
The road to Heaven, and showed it clear;
But thou untaught spring'st to the skies,
And leav'st thy teacher lingering here.

Sweet Seraph, I would learn of thee,
And hasten to partake thy bliss!
And oh! to thy world welcome me,
As first I welcomed thee to this.

Dear Angel, thou art safe in heaven;
No prayers for thee need more be made;
Oh! let thy prayers for those be given
Who oft have blessed thy infant head.

My father! I beheld thee born,
And led thy tottering steps with care;
Before me risen to Heaven's bright morn,
My son! my father! guide me there.

JOHN PIERPONT (1785-1866)

Warren's Address to the American Soldiers

Stand! the ground's your own, my braves!
Will ye give it up to slaves?
Will ye look for greener graves?
Hope ye mercy still?
What's the mercy despots feel?
Hear it in that battle-peal!
Read it on yon bristling steel!
Ask it,—ye who will.

Fear ye foes who kill for hire?
Will ye to your homes retire?
Look behind you! they're a-fire!
And, before you, see
Who have done it!—From the vale
On they come!—And will ye quail?—
Leaden rain and iron hail
Let their welcome be!

In the God of battles trust!
Die we may,—and die we must;
But, O, where can dust to dust
Be consigned so well,
As where Heaven its dews shall shed
On the martyred patriot's bed,
And the rocks shall raise their head,
Of his deeds to tell!

The Ballot

A weapon that comes down as still
As snowflakes fall upon the sod;
But executes a freeman's will,
As lightning does the will of God.

SAMUEL WOODWORTH (1785-1842)

The Old Oaken Bucket

How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew!
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell,
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure,
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As poised on the curb it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.
And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well!

RICHARD HENRY DANA (1787-1879)

The Little Beach-Bird

Thou little bird, thou dweller by the sea,
Why takest thou its melancholy voice,
And with that boding cry
Why o'er the waves dost fly?
O, rather, bird, with me
Through the fair land rejoice!

Thy flitting form comes ghostly dim and pale,
As driven by a beating storm at sea;
Thy cry is weak and scared,
As if thy mates had shared
The doom of us: Thy wail,—
What doth it bring to me?

Thou call'st along the sand, and haunt'st the surge,
Restless and sad; as if, in strange accord
With the motion and the roar
Of waves that drive to shore,
One spirit did ye urge—
The Mystery—the Word.

Of thousands, thou, both sepulchre and pall,
Old Ocean! A requiem o'er the dead
From out thy gloomy cells
A tale of mourning tells,—
Tells of man's woe and fall,
His sinless glory fled.

Then turn thee, little bird, and take thy flight
Where the complaining sea shall sadness bring
Thy spirit never more;
Come, quit with me the shore,
And on the meadows light
Where birds for gladness sing!

EMMA HART WILLARD (1787-1870)

Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep

Rocked in the cradle of the deep
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For thou, O Lord! hast power to save.
I know thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall;

And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

When in the dead of night I lie
And gaze upon the trackless sky,
The star-bespangled heavenly scroll,
The boundless waters as they roll,—
I feel thy wondrous power to save
From perils of the stormy wave:
Rocked in the cradle of the deep,
I calmly rest and soundly sleep.

And such the trust that still were mine,
Though stormy winds swept o'er the brine,
Or though the tempest's fiery breath
Roused me from sleep to wreck and death.
In ocean cave, still safe with Thee
The germ of immortality!
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

RICHARD HENRY WILDE (1789-1847)

To the Mocking-bird

Who shall thy gay buffoonery describe?
Winged mimic of the woods! thou motley fool!
Thine ever ready notes of ridicule
Pursue thy fellows still with jest and gibe.
Wit, sophist, songster, Yorick of thy tribe,
Thou sportive satirist of Nature's school,
To thee the palm of scoffing we ascribe,
Arch-mocker and mad Abbot of Misrule!
For such thou art by day—but all night long
Thou pourest a soft, sweet, pensive, solemn strain,
As if thou didst in this thy moonlight song
Like to the melancholy Jacques complain,
Musing on falsehood, folly, vice, and wrong,
And sighing for thy motley coat again.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789-1851)

My Brigantine

My brigantine!
Just in thy mould and beauteous in thy form,
Gentle in roll and buoyant on the surge,
Light as the sea-fowl rocking in the storm,
In breeze and gale thy onward course we urge,
My water-queen!

Lady of mine!
More light and swift than thou none thread the sea,
With surer keel or steadier on its path;
We brave each waste of ocean-mystery
And laugh to hear the howling tempest's wrath,
For we are thine!

My brigantine!
Trust to the mystic power that points thy way,
Trust to the eye that pierces from afar,
Trust to the red meteors that around thee play,
And, fearless, trust the Sea-Green Lady's Star,
Thou bark divine!

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790-1867)

Marco Bozzaris

At midnight, in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power:
In dreams, through camp and court, he bore
The trophies of a conqueror;
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring:
Then pressed that monarch's throne—a king;
As wild his thoughts, and gay of wing,
As Eden's garden bird.

At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Suliote band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.
There had the Persian's thousands stood,
There had the glad earth drunk their blood
On old Platæa's day;
And now there breathed that haunted air
The sons of sires who conquered there,
With arm to strike and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

An hour passed on—the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last;
He woke—to hear his sentries shriek,
"To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!"

He woke—to die midst flame, and smoke,
And shout, and groan, and sabre-stroke,
And death-shots falling thick and fast
As lightnings from the mountain-cloud;
And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band:
"Strike—till the last armed foe expires;
Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires;
God—and your native land!"

They fought—like brave men, long and well;
They piled that ground with Moslem slain,
They conquered—but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.
His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
Like flowers at set of sun.

Come to the bridal-chamber, Death!
Come to the mother's, when she feels,
For the first time, her first-born's breath;
Come when the blessed seals
That close the pestilence are broke,
And crowded cities wail its stroke;
Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake shock, the ocean storm;
Come when the heart beats high and warm
With banquet-song, and dance, and wine;
And thou art terrible—the tear,
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
Of agony, are thine.

But to the hero, when his sword
Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sounds like a prophet's word;
And in its hollow tones are heard
The thanks of millions yet to be.
Come, when his task of fame is wrought—
Come, with her laurel-leaf, blood-bought—
Come in her crowning hour—and then
Thy sunken eye's unearthly light
To him is welcome as the sight
Of sky and stars to prisoned men;

Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
Of brother in a foreign land;
Thy summons welcome as the cry
That told the Indian isles were nigh
To the world-seeking Genoese,
When the land wind, from woods of palm,
And orange-groves, and fields of balm,
Blew o'er the Haytian seas.

Bozzaris! with the storied brave
Greece nurtured in her glory's time,
Rest thee—there is no prouder grave,
Even in her own proud clime.
She wore no funeral-weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume
Like torn branch from death's leafless tree
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry,
The heartless luxury of the tomb;
But she remembers thee as one
Long loved and for a season gone;
For thee her poet's lyre is wreathed,
Her marble wrought, her music breathed;
For thee she rings the birthday bells;
Of thee her babe's first lisping tells;
For thine her evening prayer is said
At palace-couch and cottage-bed;
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow;
His plighted maiden, when she fears
For him the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears;
And she, the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek
Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her buried joys,
And even she who gave thee birth,
Will, by their pilgrim-circled hearth,
Talk of thy doom without a sigh;
For thou art Freedom's now, and Fame's:
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE (1791-1852)

Home, Sweet Home

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;

A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
O, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call,—
Give me them,—and the peace of mind, dearer than all!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile!
Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY (1791-1865)

Indian Names

Ye say, they all have pass'd away,
That noble race and brave;
That their light canoes have vanish'd
From off the crested wave;
That, 'mid the forests where they roam'd,
There rings no hunter's shout;
But their name is on your waters,—
Ye may not wash it out.

'Tis where Ontario's billow
Like Ocean's surge is curl'd;
Where strong Niagara's thunders wake
The echo of the world;
Where red Missouri bringeth
Rich tributes from the West,
And Rappahannock sweetly sleeps
On green Virginia's breast.

Ye say, their cone-like cabins,
That cluster'd o'er the vale,
Have fled away, like wither'd leaves
Before the Autumn gale:
But their memory liveth on your hills,
Their baptism on your shore;
Your everlasting rivers speak
Their dialect of yore.

Old Massachusetts wears it
Within her lordly crown,
And broad Ohio bears it
'Mid all her young renown;
Connecticut hath wreathed it
Where her quiet foliage waves,
And bold Kentucky breathed it hoarse
Through all her ancient caves.

Wachuset hides its lingering voice
Within his rocky heart,
And Alleghany graves its tone
Throughout his lofty chart;
Monadnock, on his forehead hoar,
Doth seal the sacred trust;
Your mountains build their monument,
Though ye destroy their dust.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

Thanatopsis

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart;—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice:—

Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods—rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there;
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase

His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men—
The youth in life's fresh spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

To a Waterfowl

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,

And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone! the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He, who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.

The Snow-Shower

Stand here by my side and turn, I pray,
On the lake below thy gentle eyes;
The clouds hang over it, heavy and gray,
And dark and silent the water lies;
And out of that frozen mist the snow
In wavering flakes begins to flow;
Flake after flake
They sink in the dark and silent lake.

See how in a living swarm they come
From the chambers beyond that misty veil;
Some hover awhile in air, and some
Rush prone from the sky like summer hail.
All, dropping swiftly or settling slow,
Meet, and are still in the depths below;
Flake after flake
Dissolved in the dark and silent lake.

Here delicate snow-stars, out of the cloud,
Come floating downward in airy play,
Like spangles dropped from the glistening crowd
That whiten by night the Milky Way;
There broader and burlier masses fall;
The sullen water buries them all—
Flake after flake—
All drowned in the dark and silent lake.

And some, as on tender wings they glide
From their chilly birth-cloud, dim and gray,
Are joined in their fall, and, side by side,
Come clinging along their unsteady way;
As friend with friend, or husband with wife,
Makes hand in hand the passage of life;
Each mated flake
Soon sinks in the dark and silent lake.

Lo! while we are gazing, in swifter haste
Stream down the snows, till the air is white,
As, myriads by myriads madly chased,
They fling themselves from their shadowy height.
The fair, frail creatures of middle sky,
What speed they make, with their grave so nigh;
Flake after flake
To lie in the dark and silent lake!

I see in thy gentle eyes a tear;
They turn to me in sorrowful thought;
Thou thinkest of friends, the good and dear,
Who were for a time and now are not;
Like these fair children of cloud and frost,
That glisten a moment and then are lost—
Flake after flake,—
All lost in the dark and silent lake.

Yet look again, for the clouds divide;
A gleam of blue on the water lies;
And far away, on the mountain-side,
A sunbeam falls from the opening skies.
But the hurrying host that flew between
The cloud and the water, no more is seen;
Flake after flake,
At rest in the dark and silent lake.

The Planting of the Apple-Tree

Come, let us plant the apple-tree.
Cleave the tough greensward with the spade;
Wide let its hollow bed be made;
There gently lay the roots, and there
Sift the dark mould with kindly care,
And press it o'er them tenderly,
As, round the sleeping infant's feet,
We softly fold the cradle-sheet;
So plant we the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Buds, which the breath of summer days
Shall lengthen into leafy sprays;
Boughs where the thrush, with crimson breast,
Shall haunt and sing and hide her nest;
We plant, upon the sunny lea,
A shadow for the noontide hour,
A shelter from the summer shower,
When we plant the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Sweets for a hundred flowery springs
To load the May-wind's restless wings,
When, from the orchard row, he pours
Its fragrance through our open doors;
A world of blossoms for the bee,
Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,
For the glad infant sprigs of bloom,
We plant with the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,
And redden in the August noon,
And drop, when gentle airs come by,
That fan the blue September sky,
While children come, with cries of glee,
And seek them where the fragrant grass
Betrays their bed to those who pass,
At the foot of the apple-tree.

And when, above this apple-tree,
The winter stars are quivering bright,
And winds go howling through the night,
Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth,
Shall peel its fruit by cottage-hearth,
And guests in prouder homes shall see,
Heaped with the grape of Cintra's vine
And golden orange of the line,
The fruit of the apple-tree.

The fruitage of this apple-tree
Winds and our flag of stripe and star
Shall bear to coasts that lie afar,
Where men shall wonder at the view,
And ask in what fair groves they grew;
And sojourners beyond the sea
Shall think of childhood's careless day,
And long, long hours of summer play,
In the shade of the apple-tree.

Each year shall give this apple-tree
A broader flush of roseate bloom,
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,
And loosen, when the frost-clouds lower,
The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.
The years shall come and pass, but we
Shall hear no longer, where we lie,
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,
In the boughs of the apple-tree.

And time shall waste this apple-tree.
Oh, when its aged branches throw
Thin shadows on the ground below,
Shall fraud and force and iron will
Oppress the weak and helpless still?
What shall the tasks of mercy be,
Amid the toils, the strifes, the tears
Of those who live when length of years
Is wasting this little apple-tree?

"Who planted this old apple-tree?"
The children of that distant day
Thus to some aged man shall say;
And, gazing on its mossy stem,
The gray-haired man shall answer them:
"A poet of the land was he,
Born in the rude but good old times;
'Tis said he made some quaint old rhymes,
On planting the apple-tree."

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE (1795-1820)

From "The Culprit Fay"

The Fay's Sentence

The monarch sat on his judgment-seat,
On his brow the crown imperial shone,
The prisoner Fay was at his feet,
And his peers were ranged around the throne.
He waved his sceptre in the air;
He looked around and calmly spoke;
His brow was grave and his eye severe,
But his voice in a softened accent broke:

"Fairy! Fairy! list and mark,
Thou hast broke thine elfin chain,
Thy flame-wood lamp is quenched and dark,
And thy wings are dyed with a deadly stain—
Thou hast sullied thine elfin purity
In the glance of a mortal maiden's eye,
Thou hast scorned our dread decree,
And thou shouldst pay the forfeit high,
But well I know her sinless mind
Is pure as the angel forms above,
Gentle and meek, and chaste and kind,
Such as a spirit well might love;
Fairy! had she spot or taint,

Bitter had been thy punishment.
Tied to the hornet's shardy wings;
Tossed on the pricks of nettle's stings;
Or seven long ages doomed to dwell
With the lazy worm in the walnut-shell;
Or every night to writhe and bleed
Beneath the tread of the centipede;
Or bound in a cobweb dungeon dim,
Your jailer a spider huge and grim,
Amid the carrion bodies to lie,
Of the worm, and the bug, and the murdered fly;
These it had been your lot to bear,
Had a stain been found on the earthly fair.
Now list, and mark our mild decree—
Fairy, this your doom must be:

"Thou shalt seek the beach of sand
Where the water bounds the elfin land,
Thou shalt watch the oozy brine
Till the sturgeon leaps in the bright moonshine,
Then dart the glistening arch below,
And catch a drop from his silver bow.
The water-sprites will wield their arms
  And dash around, with roar and rave,
And vain are the woodland spirits' charms,
  They are the imps that rule the wave.
Yet trust thee in thy single might,—
If thy heart be pure and thy spirit right,
Thou shalt win the warlock fight.

"If the spray-bead gem be won,
  The stain of thy wing is washed away,
But another errand must be done
  Ere thy crime be lost for aye;
Thy flame-wood lamp is quenched and dark,
Thou must re-illumine its spark.
Mount thy steed and spur him high
To the heaven's blue canopy;
And when thou seest a shooting star,
Follow it fast, and follow it far—
The last faint spark of its burning train
Shall light the elfin lamp again.
Thou hast heard our sentence, Fay;
Hence! to the water-side, away!"

The American Flag

When Freedom from her mountain height
  Unfurled her standard to the air,

She tore the azure robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.

Majestic monarch of the cloud,
Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,
To hear the tempest trumpings loud
And see the lightning lances driven,
When strive the warriors of the storm,
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven,
Child of the sun! to thee 'tis given
To guard the banner of the free,
To hover in the sulphur smoke,
To ward away the battle stroke,
And bid its blendings shine afar,
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,
The harbingers of victory!

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high,
When speaks the signal trumpet tone,
And the long line comes gleaming on.
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn,
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.
And when the cannon-mouthings loud,
Heave in wild wreaths the battle shroud,
And gory sabres rise and fall
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall,
Then shall thy meteor glances glow,
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath
Each gallant arm that strikes below
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;
When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,

And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL (1795-1856)

Elegiac

O, it is great for our country to die, where ranks are contending!
Bright is the wreath of our fame; glory awaits us for aye,—
Glory, that never is dim, shining on with light never ending,—
Glory that never shall fade, never, O never, away!
O, it is sweet for our country to die! How softly reposes
Warrior youth on his bier, wet by the tears of his love,
Wet by a mother's warm tears. They crown him with garlands of roses,
Weep, and then joyously turn, bright where he triumphs above.

Not to the shades shall the youth descend, who for country hath perished;
Hebe awaits him in heaven, welcomes him there with her smile;
There, at the banquet divine, the patriot spirit is cherished;
Gods love the young who ascend pure from the funeral pile.

Not to Elysian fields, by the still, oblivious river;
Not to the isles of the blest, over the blue, rolling sea;
But on Olympian heights shall dwell the devoted forever;
There shall assemble the good, there the wise, valiant, and free.

O, then, how great for our country to die, in the front rank to perish,
Firm with our breast to the foe, victory's shout in our ear!

Long they our statues shall crown, in songs our memory cherish;
We shall look forth from our heaven, pleased the sweet music to hear.

MARIA GOWEN BROOKS (1795-1845)

Song of Egla

Day in melting purple dying,
Blossoms all around me sighing,
Fragrance from the lilies straying,
Zephyr with my ringlets playing,
Ye but waken my distress:
I am sick of loneliness.

Thou to whom I love to hearken,
Come ere night around me darken:
Though thy softness but deceive me,
Say thou'rt true, and I'll believe thee.
Veil, if ill, thy soul's intent:
Let me think it innocent!

Save thy toiling, spare thy treasure:
All I ask is friendship's pleasure:
Let the shining ore lie darkling;
Bring no gem in lustre sparkling;
Gifts and gold are nought to me:
I would only look on thee;

Tell to thee the high-wrought feeling,
Ecstasy but in revealing;
Paint to thee the deep sensation,
Rapture in participation,
Yet but torture, if comprest
In a lone unfriended breast.

Absent still? Ah, come and bless me!
Let these eyes again caress thee.
Once, in caution, I could fly thee.
Now I nothing could deny thee.
In a look if death there be,
Come, and I will gaze on thee!

AMOS BRONSIN ALCOTT (1799-1888)

Wendell Phillips

People's Attorney, servant of the Right!
Pleader for all shades of the solar ray,

Complexions dusky, yellow, red, or white;
Who, in thy country's and thy time's despite,
Hast only questioned, What will Duty say?
And followed swiftly in her narrow way:
Tipped is thy tongue with golden eloquence,
All honeyed accents fall from off thy lips,—
Each eager listener his full measure sips,
Yet runs to waste the sparkling opulence,—
The scorn of bigots, and the worldling's flout.
If Time long held thy merit in suspense,
Hastening repentant now, with pen devout,
Impartial History dare not leave thee out.

GRENVILLE MELLEN (1799-1841)

From an "Ode on the Celebration of the Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1825"

The Lonely Bugle Grieves

The trump hath blown,
And now upon that reeking hill
Slaughter rides screaming on the vengeful ball;
While with terrific signal shrill,
The vultures, from their bloody eyries flown,
Hang o'er them like a pall.
Now deeper roll the maddening drums,
And the mingling host like ocean heaves:
While from the midst a horrid wailing comes,
And high above the fight the lonely bugle grieves!

ALBERT GORTON GREENE (1802-1868)

Old Grimes

Old Grimes is dead; that good old man
We never shall see more:
He used to wear a long black coat,
All buttoned down before.

His heart was open as the day,
His feelings all were true;
His hair was some inclined to gray—
He wore it in a queue.

Whene'er he heard the voice of pain,
His breast with pity burned;

The large, round head upon his cane
From ivory was turned.

Kind words he ever had for all;
He knew no base design:
His eyes were dark and rather small,
His nose was aquiline.

He lived at peace with all mankind,
In friendship he was true;
His coat had pocket-holes behind,
His pantaloons were blue.

Unharmed, the sin which earth pollutes
He passed securely o'er,
And never wore a pair of boots
For thirty years or more.

But good old Grimes is now at rest,
Nor fears misfortune's frown:
He wore a double-breasted vest—
The stripes ran up and down.

He modest merit sought to find,
And pay it its desert:
He had no malice in his mind,
No ruffles on his shirt.

His neighbors he did not abuse—
Was sociable and gay:
He wore large buckles on his shoes,
And changed them every day.

His knowledge, hid from public gaze,
He did not bring to view,
Nor make a noise, town-meeting days,
As many people do.

His worldly goods he never threw
In trust to fortune's chances,
But lived (as all his brothers do)
In easy circumstances.

Thus undisturbed by anxious cares,
His peaceful moments ran;
And everybody said he was
A fine old gentleman.

EDWARD COATE PINKNEY (1802-1828)

Votive Song

I burn no incense, hang no wreath,
On this thine early tomb:
Such cannot cheer the place of death,
But only mock its gloom.
Here odorous smoke and breathing flower
No grateful influence shed;
They lose their perfume and their power,
When offered to the dead.

And if, as is the Afghan's creed,
The spirit may return,
A disembodied sense to feed,
On fragrance, near its urn,—
It is enough that she, whom thou
Didst love in living years,
Sits desolate beside it now,
And fall these heavy tears.

GEORGE POPE MORRIS (1802-1864)

Woodman, Spare That Tree

Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea—
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh, spare that aged oak
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;

In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand—
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree! the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

The Problem

I like a church; I like a cowl;
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles:
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowled churchman be.
Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Knowest thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
Ever the fiery Pentecost
Girds with one flame the countless host,
Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
And through the priest the mind inspires.
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
I know what say the fathers wise,—
The Book itself before me lies,
Old Chrysostom, best Augustine,
And he who blent both in his line,
The younger Golden Lips or mines,
Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.
His words are music in my ear,
I see his cowlëd portrait dear;
And yet, for all his faith could see,
I would not the good bishop be.

Bacchus

Bring me wine, but wine which never grew
In the belly of the grape,
Or grew on vine whose tap-roots, reaching through
Under the Andes to the Cape,
Suffered no savor of the earth to 'scape.

Let its grapes the morn salute
From a nocturnal root,
Which feels the acrid juice
Of Styx and Erebus;
And turns the woe of Night,
By its own craft, to a more rich delight.

We buy ashes for bread;
We buy diluted wine;
Give me of the true,—
Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled
Among the silver hills of heaven
Draw everlasting dew;
Wine of wine,
Blood of the world,
Form of forms, and mold of statures,
That I intoxicated,
And by the draught assimilated,
May float at pleasure through all natures;
The bird-language rightly spell,
And that which roses say so well.

Wine that is shed
Like the torrents of the sun
Up the horizon walls,
Or like the Atlantic streams, which run
When the South Sea calls.

Water and bread,
Food which needs no transmuting,
Rainbow-flowering, wisdom-fruiting,
Wine which is already man,
Food which teach and reason can.

Wine which Music is,—
Music and wine are one,—
That I, drinking this,
Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
Kings unborn shall walk with me;
And the poor grass shall plot and plan
What it will do when it is man.

Quickened so, will I unlock
Every crypt of every rock.

I thank the joyful juice
For all I know;—
Winds of remembering
Of the ancient being blow,
And seeming-solid walls of use
Open and flow.

Pour, Bacchus! the remembering wine;
Retrieve the loss of me and mine!
Vine for vine be antidote,
And the grape requite the lote!
Haste to cure the old despair,—
Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
The memory of ages quenched;
Give them again to shine;
Let wine repair what this undid;
And where the infection slid,
A dazzling memory revive;
Refresh the faded tints,
Recut the agèd prints,
And write my old adventures with the pen
Which on the first day drew,
Upon the tablets blue,
The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.

The Snow-Storm

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the house-mates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,

On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

From "Saadi"

Trees in groves,
Kine in droves,
In ocean sport the scaly herds,
Wedge-like cleave the air the birds,
To northern lakes fly wind-borne ducks,
Browse the mountain sheep in flocks,
Men consort in camp and town,
But the poet dwells alone.

Brahma

If the red slayer think he slays,
  Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
  I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
  Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
  And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
  When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
  And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
  And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
  Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

The Rhodora

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,

Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come, his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the Rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But in my simple ignorance suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

Forbearance

Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?
And loved so well a high behavior,
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay?
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!

Merlin

Thy trivial harp will never please
Or fill my craving ear;
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,
Free, peremptory, clear.
No jingling serenader's art,
Nor tinkle of piano strings,
Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs.
The kingly bard
Must smite the chords rudely and hard,
As with hammer or with mace;
That they may render back
Artful thunder, which conveys
Secrets of the solar track,
Sparks of the supersolar blaze.
Merlin's blows are strokes of fate,
Chiming with the forest tone,
When boughs buffet boughs in the wood;
Chiming with the gasp and moan
Of the ice-imprisoned flood;
With the pulse of manly hearts;

With the voice of orators;
With the din of city arts;
With the cannonade of wars;
With the marches of the brave;
And prayers of might from martyr's cave.

Great is the art,
Great be the manners, of the bard.
He shall not his brain encumber
With the coil of rhythm and number;
But, leaving rule and pale forethought,
He shall aye climb
For his rhyme.
"Pass in, pass in," the angels say,
"Into the upper doors,
Nor count compartments of the floors,
But mount to paradise
By the stairway of surprise."

Blameless master of the games,
King of sport that never shames,
He shall daily joy dispense
Hid in song's sweet influence.
Forms more cheerly live and go,
What time the subtle mind
Sings aloud the tune whereto
Their pulses beat,
And march their feet,
And their members are combined.

By Sybarites beguiled,
He shall no task decline;
Merlin's mighty line
Extremes of nature reconciled,
Bereaved a tyrant of his will,
And made the lion mild.
Songs can the tempest still,
Scattered on the stormy air,
Mould the year to fair increase,
And bring in poetic peace.

He shall not seek to weave,
In weak, unhappy times,
Efficacious rhymes;
Wait his returning strength.
Bird that from the nadir's floor
To the zenith's top can soar,—
The soaring orbit of the muse exceeds that
journey's length.

Nor profane affect to hit
Or compass that, by meddling wit,
Which only the propitious mind
Publishes when 'tis inclined.

There are open hours
When the God's will sallies free,
And the dull idiot might see
The flowing fortunes of a thousand years;
Sudden, at unawares,
Self-moved, fly-to the doors,
Nor sword of angels could reveal
What they conceal.

Days

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleachëd garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

"Give All to Love"

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit, and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent;
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep thee to-day,
To-morrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise,
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

Concord Hymn

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT, APRIL 19, 1836

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;

And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

Ode

SUNG IN THE TOWN HALL, CONCORD, JULY 4, 1857

O tenderly the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire;
One morn is in the mighty heaven,
And one in our desire.

The cannon booms from town to town,
Our pulses beat not less,
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,
Which children's voices bless.

For He that flung the broad blue fold
O'er-mantling land and sea,
One third part of the sky unrolled
For the banner of the free.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind
To build an equal state,—
To take the statute from the mind
And make of duty fate.

United States! the ages plead,—
Present and Past in under-song,—
Go put your creed into your deed,
Nor speak with double tongue.

For sea and land don't understand
Nor skies without a frown
See rights for which the one hand fights
By the other cloven down.

Be just at home; then write your scroll
Of honor o'er the sea,

And bid the broad Atlantic roll
A ferry of the free.

And henceforth there shall be no chain,
Save underneath the sea
The wires shall murmur through the main
Sweet songs of liberty.

The conscious stars accord above,
The waters wild below,
And under, through the cable wove,
Her fiery errands go.

For He that worketh high and wise,
Nor pauses in His plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere freedom out of man.

Good-Bye

Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home:
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod—
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,

Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

SARAH HELEN WHITMAN (1803-1878)

Sonnets

From the Series Relating to Edgar Allan Poe

3

On our lone pathway bloomed no earthly hopes:
Sorrow and death were near us, as we stood
Where the dim forest, from the upland slopes,
Swept darkly to the sea. The enchanted wood
Thrilled, as by some foreboding terror stirred;
And as the waves broke on the lonely shore,
In their low monotone, methought I heard
A solemn voice that sighed, "Ye meet no more."
There, while the level sunbeams seemed to burn
Through the long aisles of red, autumnal gloom,—
Where stately, storied cenotaphs inurn
Sweet human hopes, too fair on Earth to bloom,—
Was the bud reaped, whose petals pure and cold
Sleep on my heart till Heaven the flower unfold.

4

If thy sad heart, pining for human love,
In its earth solitude grew dark with fear,
Lest the high Sun of Heaven itself should prove
Powerless to save from that phantasmal sphere
Wherein thy spirit wandered,—if the flowers
That pressed around thy feet, seemed but to bloom
In lone Gethsemanes, through starless hours,
When all who loved had left thee to thy doom,—
Oh, yet believe that, in that hollow vale
Where thy soul lingers, waiting to attain
So much of Heaven's sweet grace as shall avail
To lift its burden of remorseful pain,
My soul shall meet thee, and its Heaven forego
Till God's great love, on both, one hope, one Heaven bestow.

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806-1867)

Unseen Spirits

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight-tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she; but, viewlessly,
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair,
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo—
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail:
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way!—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway!

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN (1806-1884)

Monterey

We were not many—we who stood
Before the iron sleet that day—

Yet many a gallant spirit would
Give half his years, if he then could
Have been with us at Monterey.

Now here, now there, the shot, it hailed
In deadly drifts of fiery spray,
Yet not a single soldier quailed
When wounded comrades round them wailed
Their dying shout at Monterey.

And on—still on our column kept
Through walls of flame its withering way;
Where fell the dead, the living stept,
Still charging on the guns which swept
The slippery streets of Monterey.

The foe himself recoiled aghast,
When, striking where he strongest lay,
We swooped his flanking batteries past,
And braving full their murderous blast,
Stormed home the towers of Monterey.

Our banners on those turrets wave;
And there our evening bugles play;
Where orange boughs above their grave
Keep green the memory of the brave
Who fought and fell at Monterey.

We are not many,—we who pressed
Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share their warrior rest
Than not have been at Monterey?

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

Hymn to the Night

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-belovëd Night!

A Psalm of Life

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

The Skeleton in Armor

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail
Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.

Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight?
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armëd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
'Death without quarter!'
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes;
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another.

"Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!

There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*"
Thus the tale ended.

The Village Blacksmith

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees its close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

From "Tales of a Wayside Inn"

Prelude

A youth was there, of quiet ways,
A student of old books and days,
To whom all tongues and lands were known,
And yet a lover of his own;
With many a social virtue graced,
And yet a friend of solitude;
A man of such a genial mood
The heart of all things he embraced,
And yet of such fastidious taste,
He never found the best too good.
Books were his passion and delight,
And in his upper room at home
Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
Great volumes garmented in white,
Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.
He loved the twilight that surrounds
The border-land of old romance;
Where glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,
And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries and of song.
The chronicles of Charlemagne,
Of Merlin and the Mort d'Arthure,
Mingled together in his brain
With tales of Flores and Blanchefleur,
Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,
Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,
Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

From "The Spanish Student"

SERENADE

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch! while in slumbers light
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

The Arrow and the Song

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

Song of the Silent Land

FROM THE GERMAN OF SALIS

Into the Silent Land!
Ah! who shall lead us thither?
Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.
Who leads us with a gentle hand
Thither, oh, thither,
Into the Silent Land?

Into the Silent Land!
To you, ye boundless regions
Of all perfection! Tender morning-visions
Of beauteous souls! The Future's pledge and band!
Who in Life's battle firm doth stand,
Shall bear Hope's tender blossoms
Into the Silent Land!

O Land! O Land!
For all the broken-hearted
The mildest herald by our fate allotted,
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
To the land of the great Departed,
Into the Silent Land!

(*After von Salis-Seewis.*)

From "Evangeline"

A TALE OF ACADIE

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it

Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

From "The Building of the Ship"

THE REPUBLIC

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!

Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

"The Song of Hiawatha"

Introduction

Should you ask me, whence these stories?
Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odors of the forest,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
And their wild reverberations,
As of thunder in the mountains?
I should answer, I should tell you,
"From the forests and the prairies,
From the great lakes of the Northland,
From the land of the Ojibways,
From the land of the Dacotahs,
From the mountains, moors, and fen-lands,
Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Feeds among the reeds and rushes.
I repeat them as I heard them
From the lips of Nawadaha,
The musician, the sweet singer."
Should you ask where Nawadaha
Found these songs, so wild and wayward,
Found these legends and traditions,
I should answer, I should tell you,
"In the bird's-nests of the forest,
In the lodges of the beaver,
In the hoof-prints of the bison,
In the eyrie of the eagle!
"All the wild-fowl sang them to him,
In the moorlands and the fen-lands,
In the melancholy marshes;
Chetowaik, the plover, sang them,
Mahng, the loon, the wild-goose, Wawa,
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa!"
If still further you should ask me,
Saying, "Who was Nawadaha?
Tell us of this Nawadaha,"

I should answer your inquiries
Straightway in such words as follow:
"In the Vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley,
By the pleasant watercourses,
Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.
Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the cornfields,
And beyond them stood the forest,
Stood the groves of singing pine-trees,
Green in Summer, white in Winter,
Ever sighing, ever singing.
"And the pleasant watercourses,
You could trace them through the valley,
By the rushing in the Spring-time,
By the alders in the Summer,
By the white fog in the Autumn,
By the black line in the Winter;
And beside them dwelt the singer,
In the vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley.
"There he sang of Hiawatha,
Sang the Song of Hiawatha,
Sang his wondrous birth and being,
How he prayed and how he fasted,
How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,
That the tribes of men might prosper,
That he might advance his people!"
Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine-trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries;—
Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha!
Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Waving like a hand that beckons,
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken;—

Listen to this Indian Legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha!
Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened;—
Listen to this simple story,
To this Song of Hiawatha!
Ye who, sometimes, in your rambles
Through the green lanes of the country,
Where the tangled barberry-bushes
Hang their tufts of crimson berries
Over stone walls gray with mosses,
Pause by some neglected graveyard,
For a while to muse, and ponder
On a half-effaced inscription,
Written with little skill of song-craft,
Homely phrases, but each letter
Full of hope, and yet of heart-break,
Full of all the tender pathos
Of the Here and the Hereafter;—
Stay and read this rude inscription,
Read this Song of Hiawatha!

My Lost Youth

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides

Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,

That in part are prophecies, and in part
  Are longings wild and vain.
    And the voice of that fitful song
    Sings on, and is never still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
  There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
  And a mist before the eye.
    And the words of that fatal song
    Come over me like a chill:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
  When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
  As they balance up and down,
    Are singing the beautiful song,
    Are sighing and whispering still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
  And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
  I find my lost youth again.
    And the strange and beautiful song,
    The groves are repeating it still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

The Reaper and the Flowers

There is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
  And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
  And the flowers that grow between.

"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he;
  "Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
  I will give them all back again."

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
  He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
  He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,"
  The Reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
  Where He was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light,
  Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
  These sacred blossoms wear."

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
  The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
  In the fields of light above.

Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
  The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
  And took the flowers away.

"The Day Is Done"

The day is done, and the darkness
  Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
  From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
  Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
  That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
  That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
  As the mist resembles rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
  Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
  And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
  Not from the bards sublime,

Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice;

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

Chaucer

An old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

The Cross of Snow

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines,
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

Nature

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892)

Proem

(WRITTEN TO INTRODUCE THE FIRST GENERAL COLLECTION OF HIS POEMS)

I love the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;

I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine!

The Farewell

OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTERS SOLD INTO SOUTHERN BONDAGE

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
There no mother's eye is near them,
There no mother's ear can hear them;
Never, when the torturing lash
Seams their back with many a gash,
Shall a mother's kindness bless them,
Or a mother's arms caress them.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
O, when weary, sad, and slow,
From the fields at night they go,
Faint with toil, and racked with pain,
To their cheerless homes again,
There no brother's voice shall greet them;
There no father's welcome meet them.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
From the tree whose shadow lay
On their childhood's place of play;
From the cool spring where they drank;
Rock, and hill, and rivulet bank;
From the solemn house of prayer,
And the holy counsels there;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Toiling through the weary day,
And at night the spoiler's prey.
Oh, that they had earlier died,
Sleeping calmly, side by side,
Where the tyrant's power is o'er,
And the fetter galls no more!
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,

To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
By the holy love He beareth;
By the bruisëd reed He spareth;
Oh, may He, to whom alone
All their cruel wrongs are known,
Still their hope and refuge prove,
With a more than mother's love.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

The Barefoot Boy

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;

How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,—
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;

While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

Maud Muller

Maud Muller on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast,—

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

"Thanks!" said the Judge; "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed."

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown
And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah me!
That I the Judge's bride might be!

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

"My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

"I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

"And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door."

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

"A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.

"And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

"Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

"No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

"But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words."

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!

"Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been."

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge!

God pity them both! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!

Barbara Frietchie

(September 13, 1862)

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread.
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

"Halt!"—the dust-brown ranks stood fast,
"Fire!"—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;

"Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tossed
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

Brown of Ossawatomie

(December 2, 1859)

John Brown of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day:
"I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery's pay.
But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to free,
With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a prayer for me!"

John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led him out to die;
And lo! a poor slave-mother with her little child pressed nigh.

Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face
grew mild,
As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the
negro's child!

The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell apart;
And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the loving
heart.
That kiss from all its guilty means redeemed the good intent,
And round the grisly fighter's hair the martyr's aureole bent!

Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good!
Long live the generous purpose unstained with human blood!
Not the raid of midnight terror, but the thought which un-
derlies;
Not the borderer's pride of daring, but the Christian sacri-
fice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the Northern rifle hear,
Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on the negro's spear;
But let the free-winged angel Truth their guarded passes
scale,
To teach that right is more than might, and justice more
than mail!

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in array;
In vain her trampling squadrons knead the winter snow with
clay.
She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she dares not harm
the dove;
And every gate she bars to Hate, shall open wide to Love!

The Eternal Goodness

O friends! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisëd reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!

SAMUEL FRANCIS SMITH (1808-1895)

America

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;

Augsburg Seminary Library

Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,—
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees,
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,—
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God our King.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

To Helen

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door:
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door:—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore":
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore:
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door,
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door:
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,—
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered,
Till I scarcely more than muttered,—"Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and
store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden
bore:
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust
and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird
of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's
core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an
unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted
floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels
he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost
Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or
devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here
ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore:
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I
implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or
devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting:
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor:
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

To One in Paradise

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine:
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast.

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more—no more—no more—

(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy gray eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

The City in the Sea

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and
the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free:
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls,
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathëd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly, beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie

In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead,
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas,
Along that wilderness of glass;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea;
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven!
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low;
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down, that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

Israfel

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—
KORAN.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
  Whose heart-strings are a lute;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
  Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
  In her highest noon,
  The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
  While, to listen, the red levin
  (With the rapid Pleiads, even,
  Which were seven)
  Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
  And the other listening things)
That Israfel's fire

Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings,
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfel, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest:
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit:
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervor of thy lute:
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingëd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me;
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:
For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Ulalume

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispëd and sere,
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was night by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir:
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll,
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole,
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,
Our memories were treacherous and sere,
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year,
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here),
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn,
As the star-dials hinted of morn,
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn,
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs,
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies,
To the Lethean peace of the skies:
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes:
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust,
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."

In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust;
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its sibyllic splendor is beaming
With hope and in beauty to-night:
See, it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright:
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom,
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb,
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispëd and sere,
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried—"It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here,
That I brought a dread burden down here:
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
This misty mid region of Weir:
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)

The Last Leaf

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,

And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,

Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

The Height of the Ridiculous

I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb.

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest,)
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

A Logical Story—The Deacon's Masterpiece, or the Wonderful "One-Hoss Shay"

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down,* but doesn't *wear out.*

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou,*")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—

Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;
"Hahnsum kerridge," they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and Forty at last arrive,
And then come Fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day,—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay.
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,

And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.

The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once, and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

The Living Temple

Not in the world of light alone,
Where God has built his blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:
Look in upon thy wondrous frame,—
Eternal wisdom still the same!
The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,
Fired with a new and livelier blush,

While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
Forever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net
Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then, kindling each decaying part,
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,
Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds;
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,
And flashes forth the sovereign will;
Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine
To make these mystic temples thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms,
And mould it into heavenly forms!

The Chambered Nautilus

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathëd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

ALBERT PIKE (1809-1891)

Dixie

I wish I was in de land ob cotton,
Old times dar am not forgotten;

Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!
In Dixie land whar I was born in,
Early on one frosty mornin',
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!

Chorus—Den I wish I was in Dixie! Hooray! Hooray!
In Dixie's land we'll took our stand, to lib
an' die in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!

Old missus marry Will de weaber,
William was a gay deceaber,
When he put his arm around 'er,
He looked as fierce as a forty-pounder.

His face was sharp as a butcher cleaber,
But dat did not seem to greab 'er;
Will run away, missus took a decline, O
Her face was the color of bacon rhine, O.

While missus libbed, she libbed in clover,
When she died, she died all over;
How could she act de foolish part,
An' marry a man to break her heart?

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD (1811-1850)

To Sleep

Come to me, angel of the weary hearted!
Since they my loved ones, breathed upon by thee,
Unto thy realms unreal have departed,
I too may rest—even I: ah! haste to me.

I dare not bid thy darker, colder brother
With his more welcome offering appear,
For those sweet lips at morn will murmur, "Mother,"
And who shall soothe them if I be not near?

Bring me no dream, dear Sleep, though visions glowing
With hues of heaven thy wand enchanted shows;
I ask no glorious boon of thy bestowing,
Save that most true, most beautiful,—repose.

I have no heart to roam in realms of Faëry,
To follow Fancy at her elfin call:

I am too wretched—too soul-worn and weary;
Give me but rest, for rest to me is all.

Paint not the Future to my fainting spirit,
Though it were starred with glory like the skies;
There is no gift immortals may inherit,
That could rekindle hope in these cold eyes.

And for the Past—the fearful Past—ah! never
Be Memory's downcast gaze unveiled by thee:
Would thou couldst bring oblivion forever
Of all that is, that has been, and will be!

ROBERT HINCKLEY MESSINGER (1811-1874)

A Winter Wish

Old wine to drink!
Ay, give the slippery juice
That drippeth from the grape thrown loose
Within the tun;
Plucked from beneath the cliff
Of sunny-sided Teneriffe,
And ripened 'neath the blink
Of India's sun!
Tempered with well-boiled water!
Peat whiskey hot,
These make the long night shorter,—
Forgetting not
Good stout old English porter.

Old wood to burn!
Ay, bring the hill-side beech
From where the owlets meet and screech,
And ravens croak;
The crackling pine, and cedar sweet;
Bring too a clump of fragrant peat,
Dug 'neath the fern;
The knotted oak,
A fagot, too, perhaps,
Whose bright flame, dancing, winking,
Shall light us at our drinking;
While the oozing sap
Shall make sweet music to our thinking.

Old books to read!
Ay, bring those nodes of wit,

The brazen-clasped, the vellum writ,
Time-honored tomes!
The same my sire scanned before,
The same my grandsire thumbëd o'er,
The same his sire from college bore,
The well-earned meed
Of Oxford's domes:
Old Homer blind,
Old Horace, rake Anacreon, by
Old Tully, Plautus, Terence lie;
Mort Arthur's olden minstrelsie,
Quaint Burton, quainter Spenser, ay!
And Gervase Markham's venerie—
Nor leave behind
The holye Book by which we live and die.

Old friends to talk!
Ay, bring those chosen few,
The wise, the courtly, and the true,
So rarely found;
Him for my wine, him for my stud,
Him for my easel, distich, bud
In mountain walk!
Bring Walter good,
With soulful Fred, and learned Will,
And thee, my alter ego (dearer still
For every mood).

These add a bouquet to my wine!
These add a sparkle to my pine!
If these I tine,
Can books, or fire, or wine be good?

CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH (1813-1892)

The Pines and the Sea

Beyond the low marsh-meadows and the beach,
Seen through the hoary trunks of windy pines,
The long blue level of the ocean shines.
The distant surf, with hoarse, complaining speech,
Out from its sandy barrier seems to reach;
And while the sun behind the woods declines,
The moaning sea with sighing boughs combines,
And waves and pines make answer, each to each.
O melancholy soul, whom far and near,

In life, faith, hope, the same sad undertone
Pursues from thought to thought! thou needs must hear
An old refrain, too much, too long thine own:
'Tis thy mortality infects thine ear;
The mournful strain was in thyself alone.

JONES VERY (1813-1880)

The Dead

I see them,—crowd on crowd they walk the earth,
Dry leafless trees no autumn wind laid bare;
And in their nakedness find cause for mirth,
And all unclad would winter's rudeness dare;
No sap doth through their clattering branches flow,
Whence springing leaves and blossoms bright appear;
Their hearts the living God have ceased to know
Who gives the springtime to the expectant year.
They mimic life, as if from Him to steal
His glow of health to paint the livid cheek;
They borrow words for thoughts they cannot feel,
That with a seeming heart their tongue may speak;
And in their show of life more dead they live
Than those that to the earth with many tears they give.

EPES SARGENT (1813-1880)

A Life on the Ocean Wave

A life on the ocean wave,
  A home on the rolling deep,
Where the scattered waters rave,
  And the winds their revels keep!
Like an eagle caged, I pine
  On this dull, unchanging shore:
Oh! give me the flashing brine,
  The spray and the tempest's roar!

Once more on the deck I stand
  Of my own swift-gliding craft:
Set sail! farewell to the land!
  The gale follows fair abaft.
We shoot through the sparkling foam
  Like an ocean-bird set free;—
Like the ocean-bird, our home
  We'll find far out on the sea.

The land is no longer in view,
The clouds have begun to frown;
But with a stout vessel and crew,
We'll say, Let the storm come down!
And the song of our hearts shall be,
While the winds and the waters rave,
A home on the rolling sea!
A life on the ocean wave!

JOHN GODFREY SAXE (1816-1887)

Early Rising

"God bless the man who first invented sleep!"
So Sancho Pansa said, and so say I:
And bless him, also, that he didn't keep
His great discovery to himself; nor try
To make it—as the lucky fellow might—
A close monopoly by patent-right.

Yes—bless the man who first invented sleep
(I really can't avoid the iteration),
But blast the man, with curses loud and deep,
Whate'er the rascal's name, or age, or station,
Who first invented, and went round advising,
That artificial cut-off, early rising.

"Rise with the lark, and with the lark to bed,"
Observes some solemn, sentimental owl;
Maxims like these are very cheaply said;
But, ere you make yourself a fool or fowl,
Pray just inquire about his rise and fall,
And whether larks have any beds at all!

The time for honest folks to be a-bed
Is in the morning, if I reason right;
And he who cannot keep his precious head
Upon his pillow till it's fairly light,
And so enjoy his forty morning winks,
Is up to knavery—or else he drinks!

Thompson, who sung about the "Seasons," said
It was a glorious thing to *rise* in season;
But then he said it lying—in his bed,
At ten o'clock A.M.,—the very reason
He wrote so charmingly. The simple fact is,
His preaching wasn't sanctioned by his practice.

'Tis, doubtless, well to be sometimes awake,—
  Awake to duty, and awake to truth,—
But when, alas! a nice review we take
  Of our best deeds and days, we find, in sooth,
The hours that leave the slightest cause to weep
Are those we passed in childhood or asleep!

'Tis beautiful to leave the world awhile
  For the soft visions of the gentle night;
And free, at last, from mortal care or guile,
  To live as only in the angels' sight,
In sleep's sweet realm so cosily shut in,
Where, at the worst, we only *dream* of sin!

So let us sleep, and give the Maker praise.
  I like the lad who, when his father thought
To clip his morning nap by hackneyed phrase
  Of vagrant worm by early songster caught,
Cried, "Served him right!—it's not at all surprising;
The worm was punished, sir, for early rising!"

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862)

Inspiration

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it,—

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear,—
Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;

Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'Tis peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
By a gray wall, or some chance place,
Unseasoning time, insulting June,
And vexing day with its presuming face.

I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and wooes me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

Mist

Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Dew-cloth, dream-drapery,
And napkin spread by fays;
Drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinth
The bittern booms and heron wades;
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,—
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1818-1901)

From "A Poet's Hope"

Lady, there is a hope that all men have,—
Some mercy for their faults, a grassy place
To rest in, and a flower-strown, gentle grave;
Another hope which purifies our race,
That, when that fearful bourne forever past,
They may find rest,—and rest so long to last.

I seek it not, I ask no rest for ever,
My path is onward to the farthest shores,—
Upbear me in your arms, unceasing river,
That from the soul's clear fountain swiftly pours,
Motionless not, until the end is won,
Which now I feel hath scarcely felt the sun.

To feel, to know, to soar unlimited
Mid throngs of light-winged angels sweeping far,
And pore upon the realms unvisited

That tessellate the unseen, unthought star,—
To be the thing that now I feebly dream,
Flashing within my faintest, deepest gleam.

Ah! caverns of my soul! how thick your shade,
Where flows that life by which I faintly see:—
Wave your bright torches, for I need your aid,
Golden-eyed demons of my ancestry!
Your son though blinded hath a light within,
A heavenly fire which ye from suns did win.

And, lady, in thy hope my life will rise
Like the air-voyager, till I upbear
These heavy curtains of my filmy eyes
Into a lighter, more celestial air:
A mortal's hope shall bear me safely on,
Till I the higher region shall have won.

O Time! O Death! I clasp you in my arms,
For I can soothe an infinite cold sorrow,
And gaze contented on your icy charms
And that wild snow-pile which we call to-morrow;
Sweep on, O soft and azure-lidded sky,
Earth's waters to your gentle gaze reply.

I am not earth-born, though I here delay;
Hope's child, I summon infiniter powers,
And laugh to see the mild and sunny day
Smile on the shrunk and thin autumnal hours;
I laugh, for hope hath happy place with me,—
If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891)

She Came and Went

As a twig trembles, which a bird
  Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,
So is my memory thrilled and stirred;—
  I only know she came and went.

As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,
  The blue dome's measureless content,
So my soul held that moment's heaven;—
  I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps
  The orchards full of bloom and scent,

So clove her May my wintry sleeps;—
I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,
Through the low doorway of my tent;
The tent is struck, the vision stays;—
I only know she came and went.

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,
And life's last oil is nearly spent,
One gush of light these eyes will brim,
Only to think she came and went.

From "The Vision of Sir Launfal"

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking;
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,

Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

From "The Biglow Papers"

WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

Guvener B. is a sensible man;
He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;
He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,
An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?
We can't never choose him o' course,—thet's flat;
Guess we shall hev to come round, (don't you?)
An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral C. is a dreffle smart man:
He's ben on all sides thet give places or pelf;
But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—
He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself;—
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;
He don't vally princerple morn'n an old cud;
Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' Presidunt Polk, you know, *he* is our country.
An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book
Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contry;*
An' John P.
Robinson he
Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw, fum;*
An thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half rum;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,
An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow,—
God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,
To start the world's team wen it gits in a slough;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

From "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration"
JULY 21, 1865

I

Weak-winged is song,
Nor aims at that clear-ethered height
Whither the brave deed climbs for light:
We seem to do them wrong,
Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their hearse
Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse,
Our trivial song to honor those who come
With ears attuned to strenuous trump and drum,
And shaped in squadron-strophes their desire,
Live-battle-odes whose lines were steel and fire:
Yet sometimes feathered words are strong,
A gracious memory to buoy up and save
From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common grave
Of the unventurous throng.

II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes back
Her wisest Scholars, those who understood
The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,
And offered their fresh lives to make it good:
No lore of Greece or Rome,
No science peddling with the names of things,
Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,
Can lift our life with wings
Far from Death's idle gulf that for the many waits
And lengthen out our dates
With that clear fame whose memory sings
In manly hearts to come, and nerves them and dilates:
Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!
Not such the trumpet-call
Of thy diviner mood,
That could thy sons entice
From happy homes and toils, the fruitful nest
Of those half-virtues which the world calls best,
Into War's tumult rude;
But rather far that stern device
The sponsors chose that round thy cradle stood
In the dim, unventured wood,
The VERITAS that lurks beneath
The letter's unprolific sheath,
Life of whate'er makes life worth living,
Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food,
One heavenly thing whereof earth hath the giving.

III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil
Amid the dust of books to find her,
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.
Many in sad faith sought for her,
Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
But these, our brothers, fought for her,
At life's dear peril wrought for her,
So loved her that they died for her,
Tasting the raptured fleetness
Of her divine completeness:
Their higher instinct knew
Those love her best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
They followed her and found her
Where all may hope to find,
Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.
Where faith made whole with deed
Breathes its awakening breath
Into the lifeless creed,
They saw her plumed and mailed,
With sweet, stern face unveiled,
And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death.

IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and glides
Into the silent hollow of the past;
What is there that abides
To make the next age better for the last?
Is earth too poor to give us
Something to live for here that shall outlive us?
Some more substantial boon
Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's fickle moon?
The little that we see
From doubt is never free;
The little that we do
Is but half-nobly true;
With our laborious hiving
What men call treasure, and the gods call dross,
Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving,
Only secure in every one's conniving,
A long account of nothings paid with loss,
Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,
After our little hour of strut and rave,

With all our pasteboard passions and desires,
Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,
Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.
But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,
Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,
For in our likeness still we shape our fate.
Ah, there is something here
Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,
Something that gives our feeble light
A high immunity from Night,
Something that leaps life's narrow bars
To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;
A seed of sunshine that can leaven
Our earthly dullness with the beams of stars,
And glorify our clay
With light from fountains elder than the Day;
A conscience more divine than we,
A gladness fed with secret tears,
A vexing, forward-reaching sense
Of some more noble permanence;
A light across the sea,
Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,
Still beaconing from the heights of undegenerate years.

VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:
Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.

Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,

And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface
And thwart her genial will;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

IX

But is there hope to save
Even this ethereal essence from the grave?
What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong
Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song?
Before my musing eye
The mighty ones of old sweep by,
Disvoicëd now and insubstantial things,
As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,
Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,
And many races, nameless long ago,

To darkness driven by that imperious gust
Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow:
O visionary world, condition strange,
Where naught abiding is but only Change,
Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!
Shall we to more continuance make pretence?
Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;
And, bit by bit,
The cunning years steal all from us but woe;
Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest sow.
But, when we vanish hence,
Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,
Save to make green their little length of sods,
Or deepen pansies for a year or two,
Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?
Was dying all they had the skill to do?
That were not fruitless: but the Soul resents
Such short-lived service, as if blind events
Ruled without her, or earth could so endure;
She claims a more divine investiture
Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;
Whate'er she touches doth her nature share;
Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,
Gives eyes to mountains blind,
Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the wind,
And her clear trump sings succor everywhere
By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;
For soul inherits all that soul could dare:
Yea, Manhood hath a wider span
And larger privilege of life than man.
The single deed, the private sacrifice,
So radiant now through proudly-hidden tears,
Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes
With thoughtless drift of the deciduous years;
But that high privilege that makes all men peers,
That leap of heart whereby a people rise
Up to a noble anger's height,
And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink, but grow more bright,
That swift validity in noble veins,
Of choosing danger and disdaining shame,
Of being set on flame
By the pure fire that flies all contact base
But wraps its chosen with angelic might,
These are imperishable gains,
Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,
These hold great futures in their lusty reins
And certify to earth a new imperial race.

JULIA WARD HOWE (1819-1910)

Battle-Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

One's-self I Sing

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse,
I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

As I Ponder'd in Silence

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
The genius of poets of old lands,
As to me directing like flame its eyes,
With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
And menacing voice, *What singest thou?* it said,
Know'st thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring bards?
And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,
The making of perfect soldiers.
Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too haughty Shade also sing war, and a longer and greater one than any,
Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight, advance and retreat, victory deferr'd and wavering,
(*Yet methinks certain, or as good as certain, at the last*), *the field the world,*
For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul,
Lo, I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
I above all promote brave soldiers.

To You

Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me?
And why should I not speak to you?

From "The Song of Myself"

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this air,

Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back awhile sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

. . . . . .

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps,
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceased the moment life appeared.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

. . . . . .

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it that I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?
All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whimpering and truckling, fold with powders for invalids, conformity goes to the fourth-remov'd,
I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious?

Having pried through the strata, analysed to a hair, counsell'd with doctors and calculated close,
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

. . . . . .

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

. . . . . .

One world is away and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.
My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

. . . . . .

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

. . . . . .

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steamship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm,

How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,
And chalked in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you;*
How he followed with them and tacked with them three days and would not give it up,
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gowned women looked when boated from the side of their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants, and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipped unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffered, I was there.

. . . . . .

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

. . . . . .

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking, and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them,
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!
Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

. . . . . .

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I
touch or am touch'd from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

. . . . . .

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid
and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania
of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands
of years ago.
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them,
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in
their possession.

. . . . . .

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with me into the
Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity
indicate?
We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers,
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

. . . . . .

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stars,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between
the steps,
All below duly travelled, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist,
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugged close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have helped me.
Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me,
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

. . . . . .

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven,
And I said to my spirit, *When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of everything in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied then?*
And my spirit said, *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.*

. . . . . .

And as to you, Death, and you, bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me.

To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes,
I see the elder-hand pressing, receiving, supporting,
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

And as to you, Corpse, I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me,
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.

And as to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths,
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before).

I hear you whispering there, O stars of heaven,
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and promotions,
If you do not say anything how can I say anything?

. . . . . .

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapour and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.
I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

When I Heard at the Close of the Day

When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I was not happy,

But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in the morning light,
When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
And when I thought how my dear friend, my lover, was on his way coming, O then I was happy,
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening came my friend,
And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly continually up the shores,
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to me whispering to congratulate me,
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that night I was happy.

Song of the Open Road

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient;
I do not want the constellations any nearer;
I know they are very well where they are;
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

. . . . . .

You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

. . . . . .

Augsburg Seminary

From this hour, freedom!
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute,
Listening to others, and considering well what they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space;
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought;
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me;
I can repeat over to men and women, You have done such good to me I would do the same to you.
I will recruit for myself and you as I go;
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go;
I will toss the new gladness and roughness among them;
Whoever denies me, it shall not trouble me;
Whoever accepts me, he or she shall be blessed, and shall bless me.

. . . . . .

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear, it would not amaze me;

Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd, it would not astonish me.

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth.

. . . . . .

Allons! whoever you are, come travel with me!
Travelling with me, you find what never tires.

The earth never tires,
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd,

I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here,
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here,
However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here,
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

. . . . . .

Allons! the inducements shall be greater,
We will sail pathless and wild seas,
We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the Yankee clipper speeds by under full sail.

Allons! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements,
Health, defiance, gaiety, self-esteem, curiosity;
Allons! from all formules!
From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests.

The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial waits no longer.

. . . . . .

Listen! I will be honest with you;
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes,
These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd, you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you;
What beckonings of love you receive, you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting,
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.

. . . . . .

Allons! after the GREAT COMPANIONS, and to belong to them!
They too are on the road—they are the swift and majestic men—they are the greatest women,

Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas,
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land.

. . . . . .

Allons! through struggles and wars!
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded?
What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? Nature?
Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion,
He going with me must go well arm'd,
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty, angry enemies, desertions.

. . . . . .

Allons! the road is before us!
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well—
Allons! be not detain'd!

Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the book on the shelf unopen'd!
Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money remain unearn'd!
Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the teacher!
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer plead in the court, and the judge expound the law.

Mon enfant! I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

From "A Song of Joys"

O to make the most jubilant song!
Full of music—full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!
Full of common employments—full of grain and trees.

O for the voices of animals—O for the swiftness and balance of fishes!
O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!
O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!

O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like lightning!
It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time,
I will have thousands of globes and all time.

Beautiful Women

Women sit or move to and fro, some old, some young,
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than the young.

The Dresser

1

An old man bending, I come, among new faces,
Years looking backward, resuming, in answer to children,
Come tell us, old man, as from young men and maidens that love me,
(Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarum, and urge relentless war,
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd myself,
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the dead;)
Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions, these chances,
Of unsurpass'd heroes (was one side so brave? the other was equally brave;)
Now be witness again—paint the mightiest armies of earth;
Of those armies, so rapid, so wondrous, what saw you to tell us?
What stays with you latest and deepest? of curious panics,
Of hard-fought engagements, or sieges tremendous, what deepest remains?

2

O maidens and young men I love, and that love me,
What you ask of my days, those the strangest and sudden your talking recalls;
Soldier alert I arrive, after a long march, cover'd with sweat and dust;

In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly shout
in the rush of successful charge;
Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running river
they fade,
Pass and are gone, they fade—I dwell not on soldiers' perils
or soldiers' joys,
(Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the joys, yet
I was content).

But in silence, in dreams' projections,
While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes on,
So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the imprints
off the sand,
In nature's reverie sad, with hinged knees returning, I enter
the doors—(while for you up there,
Whoever you are, follow me without noise, and be of strong
heart).

3

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,
Straight and swift to my wounded I go,
Where they lie on the ground, after the battle brought in;
Where their priceless blood reddens the grass, the ground;
Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd hos-
pital;
To the long rows of cots, up and down, each side, I return;
To each and all, one after another, I draw near—not one do
I miss;
An attendant follows, holding a tray—he carries a refuse pail,
Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and
fill'd again.

I onward go, I stop,
With hinged knees and steady hand, to dress wounds;
I am firm with each—the pangs are sharp, yet unavoidable;
One turns to me his appealing eyes—(poor boy! I never knew
you,
Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for you,
if that would save you).

4

On, on I go!—(open doors of time! open hospital doors!)
The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand, tear not the
bandage away),
The neck of the cavalry-man, with the bullet through and
through, I examine;

Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life struggles hard;
(Come sweet death! be persuaded O beautiful death!
In mercy come quickly).

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood;
Back on his pillow the soldier bends, with curv'd neck, and side-falling head,
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the bloody stump,
And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive,
While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
These and more I dress with impassive hand (yet deep in my breast a fire, a burning flame).

5

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals,
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,
I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so young,
Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and sad,
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips).

From "By Blue Ontario's Shore"

Give me the pay I have served for,
Give me to sing the songs of the great Idea, take all the rest,
I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised riches,
I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for the stupid and crazy, devoted my income and labor to others,

Hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience and
indulgence toward the people, taken off my hat to nothing
known or unknown,
Gone freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the
young, and with the mothers of families,
Read these leaves to myself in the open air, tried them by trees,
stars, rivers,
Dismiss'd whatever insulted my own soul or defiled my body,
Claim'd nothing to myself which I have not carefully claim'd
for others on the same terms,
Sped to the camps, and comrades found and accepted from
every State,
(Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd to breathe
his last,
This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd, restored,
To life recalling many a prostrate form);
I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of the
taste of myself,
Rejecting none, permitting all.

"O Captain! My Captain!"

(Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is
won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores
a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and
done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

"When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S BURIAL HYMN

I

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
And the great star early drooped in the western sky in the night,
I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

O ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful, western, fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappeared—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul!

III

In the dooryard fronting an old farmhouse, near the white-washed palings,
Stands the lilac-bush, tall-growing, with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom, rising, delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-colored blossoms, and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life—(for well, dear brother, I know
If thou wast not gifted to sing, thou wouldst surely die).

V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peeped from the ground, spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inlooped flags, with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves, as of crape-veiled women standing,
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit—with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn;
With all the mournful voices of the dirges poured around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—Where amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang;
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

VII

(Nor for you, for one, alone;
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring:

For fresh as the morning—thus would I carol a song for you,
O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies;
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes;
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you, and the coffins all of you, O death.)

VIII

O western orb, sailing the heaven!
Now I know what you must have meant, as a month since we walked,
As we walked up and down in the dark blue so mystic,
As we walked in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you drooped from the sky low down, as if to my side, (while the other stars all looked on,)
As we wandered together the solemn night, (for something, I know not what, kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west ere you went, how full you were of woe;
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watched where you passed, and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul, in its trouble, dissatisfied, sank, as where you, sad orb,
Concluded, dropped in the night, and was gone.

IX

Sing on, there in the swamp!
O singer bashful and tender! I hear your notes—I hear your call,
I hear—I come presently—I understand you;
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detained me,
The star, my departing comrade, holds and detains me.

X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be, for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand, with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life, and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

XII

Lo, body and soul—this land,
Mighty Manhattan, with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies covered with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle, soft-born, measureless light,
The miracle, spreading, bathing all, the fulfilled noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

XIII

Sing on, sing on, you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,

Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.
Sing on, dearest brother—warble your reedy song;
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

XIV

Now while I sat in the day and looked forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmer preparing his crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturbed winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sailed,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets, how their throbbings throbbed, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest received me,
The gray-brown bird I know received us comrades three,
And he sang what seemed the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Death Carol

Come, lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong Deliveress!
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song!

Over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities all, and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death.

XV

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes, spreading, filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist, and the swamp-perfume;
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

I saw askant the armies,
And I saw, as in noiseless dreams, hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splintered and broken.

I saw battle corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men—I saw them;
I saw the debris and debris of all the dead soldiers of the war;
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffered not,
The living remained and suffered, the mother suffered,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffered,
And the armies that remained suffered.

XVI

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird, and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying, ever-altering song,

As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee, lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the dooryard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous, with silver face in the night.

Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the lilac tall, and its blossoms of mastering odor;
With the holders holding my hand hearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird, twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

To a Common Prostitute

Be composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty as Nature,
Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you,
Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you and the leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you.

My girl, I appoint with you an appointment, and I charge you that you make preparation to be worthy to meet me,
And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I come.

Till then I salute you with a significant look that you do not forget me.

From "So Long"

Camerado, this is no book,
Who touches this touches a man,
(Is it night? are we here together alone?)
It is I you hold and who holds you,
I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls me forth.

O how your fingers drowse me,
Your breath falls around me like dew, your pulse lulls the tympans of my ears,
I feel immerged from head to foot,
Delicious, enough.

Enough O deed impromptu and secret,
Enough O gliding present—enough O summ'd-up past.

Dear friend whoever you are take this kiss,
I give it especially to you, do not forget me,
I feel like one who has done work for the day to retire awhile,
I receive now again of my many translations, from my avataras ascending, while others doubtless await me,
An unknown sphere more real than I dream'd, more direct, darts awakening rays about me, *So long!*
Remember my words, I may again return,
I love you, I depart from materials,
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

Good-bye My Fancy!

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)

If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

Darest Thou Now, O Soul

Darest thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul!
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,—
All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the tie is loosened,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space, O soul! prepared for them,
Equal, equipped at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil, O soul!

THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH (1819-1902)

Ben Bolt

Don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,—
Sweet Alice whose hair was so brown,
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
And trembled with fear at your frown?
In the old church-yard in the valley, Ben Bolt,
In a corner obscure and alone,
They have fitted a slab of the granite so gray,
And Alice lies under the stone.

Under the hickory tree, Ben Bolt,
Which stood at the foot of the hill,
Together we've lain in the noonday shade,
And listened to Appleton's mill.

The mill-wheel has fallen to pieces, Ben Bolt,
The rafters have tumbled in,
And a quiet which crawls round the walls as you gaze
Has followed the olden din.

Do you mind of the cabin of logs, Ben Bolt,
At the edge of the pathless wood,
And the button-ball tree with its motley limbs,
Which nigh by the doorstep stood?
The cabin to ruin has gone, Ben Bolt,
The tree you would seek for in vain;
And where once the lords of the forest waved
Are grass and the golden grain.

And don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
With the master so cruel and grim,
And the shaded nook in the running brook
Where the children went to swim?
Grass grows on the master's grave, Ben Bolt,
The spring of the brook is dry,
And of all the boys who were schoolmates then
There are only you and I.

There is change in the things I loved, Ben Bolt,
They have changed from the old to the new;
But I feel in the deeps of my spirit the truth,
There never was change in you.
Twelvemonths twenty have past, Ben Bolt,
Since first we were friends—yet I hail
Your presence a blessing, your friendship a truth,
Ben Bolt of the salt-sea gale.

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819-1881)

Daniel Gray

If I shall ever win the home in heaven
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,
In the great company of the forgiven
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

I knew him well; in truth, few knew him better;
For my young eyes oft read for him the Word,
And saw how meekly from the crystal letter
He drank the life of his beloved Lord.

Old Daniel Gray was not a man who lifted
On ready words his freight of gratitude,
Nor was he called as one among the gifted,
In the prayer-meetings of his neighborhood.

He had a few old-fashioned words and phrases,
Linked in with sacred texts and Sunday rhymes;
And I suppose that in his prayers and graces
I've heard them all at least a thousand times.

I see him now—his form, his face, his motions,
His homespun habit, and his silver hair,—
And hear the language of his trite devotions,
Rising behind the straight-backed kitchen chair.

I can remember how the sentence sounded—
"Help us, O Lord, to pray and not to faint!"
And how the "conquering and to conquer," rounded
The loftier aspirations of the saint.

He had some notions that did not improve him:
He never kissed his children—so they say;
And finest scenes and fairest flowers would move him
Less than a horse-shoe picked up in the way.

He had a hearty hatred of oppression,
And righteous words for sin of every kind;
Alas, that the transgressor and transgression
Were linked so closely in his honest mind!

He could see naught but vanity in beauty,
And naught but weakness in a fond caress,
And pitied men whose views of Christian duty
Allowed indulgence in such foolishness.

Yet there were love and tenderness within him;
And I am told that when his Charley died,
Nor nature's need nor gentle words could win him
From his fond vigils at the sleeper's side.

And when they came to bury little Charley
They found fresh dew-drops sprinkled in his hair,
And on his breast a rose-bud gathered early,
And guessed, but did not know, who placed it there.

Honest and faithful, constant in his calling,
Strictly attendant on the means of grace,
Instant in prayer, and fearful most of falling,
Old Daniel Gray was always in his place.

A practical old man, and yet a dreamer,
He thought that in some strange, unlooked-for way,
His mighty Friend in Heaven, the great Redeemer,
Would honor him with wealth some golden day.

This dream he carried in a hopeful spirit
Until in death his patient eye grew dim,
And his Redeemer called him to inherit
The heaven of wealth long garnered up for him.

So, if I ever win the home in heaven
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,
In the great company of the forgiven
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

HERMAN MELVILLE (1819-1891)

The Enviable Isles

Through storms you reach them and from storms are free
  Afar descried, the foremost drear in hue,
But, nearer, green; and, on the marge, the sea
  Makes thunder low and mist of rainbowed dew.

But, inland,—where the sleep that folds the hills
A dreamier sleep, the trance of God, instils,—
  On uplands hazed, in wandering airs aswoon,
Slow-swaying palms salute love's cypress tree
  Adown in vale where pebbly runlets croon
A song to lull all sorrow and all glee.

Sweet-fern and moss in many a glade are here,
  Where, strown in flocks, what cheek-flushed myriads lie
Dimpling in dream, unconscious slumberers mere,
  While billows endless round the beaches die.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS (1819-1892)

On a Bust of Dante

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
  How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan's song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,

Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was,—but a fight!
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,
To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here,—this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
Dread scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

Into the Noiseless Country

Into the noiseless country Annie went,
Among the silent people where no sound
Of wheel or voice or implement—no roar
Of wind or billow moves the tranquil air:

And oft at midnight when my strength is spent
And day's delirium in the lull is drowned
Of deepening darkness, as I kneel before
Her palm and cross, comes to my soul this prayer,
That partly brings me back to my content,
"Oh, that hushed forest!—soon may I be there!"

HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL (1820-1872)

The Burial of the Dane

Blue gulf all around us,
Blue sky overhead—
Muster all on the quarter,
We must bury the dead!

It is but a Danish sailor,
Rugged of front and form;
A common son of the forecastle,
Grizzled with sun and storm.

His name, and the strand he hailed from
We know, and there's nothing more!
But perhaps his mother is waiting
In the lonely Island of Fohr.

Still, as he lay there dying,
Reason drifting awreck,
"'Tis my watch," he would mutter,
"I must go upon deck!"

Aye, on deck, by the foremast!
  But watch and lookout are done;
The Union Jack laid o'er him,
  How quiet he lies in the sun!

Slow the ponderous engine,
  Stay the hurrying shaft;
Let the roll of the ocean
  Cradle our giant craft;
Gather around the grating,
  Carry your messmate aft!

Stand in order, and listen
  To the holiest page of prayer!
Let every foot be quiet,
  Every head be bare—
The soft trade-wind is lifting
  A hundred locks of hair.

Our captain reads the service,
  (A little spray on his cheeks)
The grand old words of burial,
  And the trust a true heart seeks:—
"We therefore commit his body
  To the deep"—and, as he speaks,

Launched from the weather railing,
  Swift as the eye can mark,
The ghastly, shotted hammock
  Plunges, away from the shark,
Down, a thousand fathoms,
  Down into the dark!

A thousand summers and winters
  The stormy Gulf shall roll
High o'er his canvas coffin;
  But, silence to doubt and dole:—
There's a quiet harbor somewhere
  For the poor aweary soul.

Free the fettered engine,
  Speed the tireless shaft,
Loose to'gallant and topsail.
  The breeze is fair abaft!

Blue sea all around us,
  Blue sky bright o'erhead—
Every man to his duty,
  We have buried our dead!

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ (1822-1872)

Drifting

My soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My wingëd boat,
A bird afloat,
Swings round the purple peaks remote:—

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,
With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,

With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where Summer sings and never dies,—
O'erveiled with vines
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gambolling with the gambolling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rocks like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep bark goes
Where traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows;
This happier one,—
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails, and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar:
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

GEORGE HENRY BOKER (1823-1890)

Dirge for a Soldier

Close his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars,
What but death bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye,
Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by:
God alone has power to aid him.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON (1823-1911)

To Duty

Light of dim mornings; shield from heat and cold;
Balm for all ailments; substitute for praise;
Comrade of those who plod in lonely ways
(Ways that grow lonelier as the years wax old);
Tonic for fears; check to the over-bold;
Nurse, whose calm hand its strong restriction lays,
Kind but resistless, on our wayward days;
Mart, where high wisdom at vast price is sold;
Gardener, whose touch bids the rose-petals fall,
The thorns endure; surgeon, who human hearts
Searchest with probes, though the death-touch be given;
Spell that knits friends, but yearning lovers parts;
Tyrant relentless o'er our blisses all;—
Oh, can it be, thine other name is Heaven?

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824-1892)

Ebb and Flow

I walked beside the evening sea,
And dreamed a dream that could not be;
The waves that plunged along the shore
Said only—"Dreamer, dream no more!"

But still the legions charged the beach;
Loud rang their battle-cry, like speech;
But changed was the imperial strain:
It murmured—"Dreamer, dream again!"

I homeward turned from out the gloom,—
That sound I heard not in my room;
But suddenly a sound, that stirred
Within my very breast, I heard.

It was my heart, that like a sea
Within my breast beat ceaselessly:
But like the waves along the shore,
It said—"Dream on!" and "Dream no more!"

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND (1824-1903)

Hans Breitmann's Party

Hans Breitmann gife a barty,
Dey had biano-blayin;

I felled in lofe mit a Merican frau,
Her name was Madilda Yane.
She hat haar as prown ash a pretzel,
Her eyes vas himmel-plue,
Und ven dey looket indo mine,
Dey shplit mine heart in two.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty.
I vent dere you'll be pound.
I valset mit Madilda Yane
Und vent shpinnen round und round.
De pootiest Frauelein in de House,
She vayed 'pout dwo hoondred pound,
Und efery dime she give a shoomp
She make de vindows sound.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty,
I dells you it cost him dear.
Dey rolled in more ash sefen kecks
Of foost-rate Lager Beer.
Und venefer dey knocks de shpicket in,
De Deutschers gifes a cheer.
I dinks dat so vine a barty
Nefer coom to a het dis year.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty;
Dere all vas Souse und Brouse,
Ven de sooper coomed in, de gompany
Did make demselfs to house;
Dey ate das Brot und Gensy broost,
De Bratwurst und Braten fine,
Und vash der Abendessen down
Mit four parrels of Neckarwein.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty;
We all cot troonk ash bigs.
I poot mine mout to a parrel of bier,
Und emptied it oop mit a schwigs.
Und denn I gissed Madilda Yane
Und she shlog me on de kop,
Und de gompany fited mit daple-lecks
Dill de coonshtable made oos shtop.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty—
Where ish dat barty now?
Where ish de lofely golden cloud
Dat float on de moundain's prow?

Where ish de himmelstrahlende Stern—
De shtar, of dè shpirit's light?
All goned afay mit de Lager Beer—
Afay in de Ewigkeit!

The Two Friends

I have two friends—two glorious friends—two better could not be,
And every night when midnight tolls they meet to laugh with me.

The first was shot by Carlist thieves—ten years ago in Spain.
The second drowned near Alicante—while I alive remain.

I love to see their dim white forms come floating through the night,
And grieve to see them fade away in early morning light.

The first with gnomes in the Under Land is leading a lordly life,
The second has married a mermaiden, a beautiful water-wife.

And since I have friends in the Earth and Sea—with a few, I trust, on high,
'Tis a matter of small account to me—the way that I may die.

For whether I sink in the foaming flood, or swing on the triple tree,
Or die in my bed, as a Christian should, is all the same to me.

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825-1878)

Song

Daughter of Egypt, veil thine eyes!
I cannot bear their fire;
Nor will I touch with sacrifice
Those altars of desire.
For they are flames that shun the day,
And their unholy light
Is fed from natures gone astray
In passion and in night.

The stars of Beauty and of Sin,
They burn amid the dark,
Like beacons that to ruin win
The fascinated bark.

Then veil their glow, lest I forswear
The hopes thou canst not crown,
And in the black waves of thy hair
My struggling manhood drown!

Bedouin Song

From the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see
My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart,
And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

JULIA CAROLINE RIPLEY DORR (1825-1913)

Two Paths

A path across a meadow fair and sweet,
Where clover-blooms the lithesome grasses greet,

A path worn smooth by his impetuous feet.
A straight, swift path—and at its end, a star
Gleaming behind the lilac's fragrant bar,
And her soft eyes, more luminous by far!

A path across the meadow fair and sweet,
Still sweet and fair where blooms and grasses meet—
A path worn smooth by his reluctant feet.

A long, straight path—and, at its end, a gate
Behind whose bars she doth in silence wait
To keep the tryst, if he come soon or late!

JOHN WILLIAMSON PALMER (1825-1906)

The Fight at the San Jacinto

"Now for a brisk and cheerful fight!"
  Said Harman, big and droll,
As he coaxed his flint and steel for a light,
  And puffed at his cold clay bowl;
"For we are a skulking lot," says he,
  "Of land-thieves hereabout,
And these bold señores, two to one,
  Have come to smoke us out."

Santa Anna and Castillon,
  Almonte brave and gay,
Portilla red from Goliad,
  And Cos with his smart array.
Dulces and cigaritos,
  And the light guitar, ting-tum!
Sant' Anna courts siesta,
  And Sam Houston taps his drum.

The buck stands still in the timber—
  "Is it patter of nuts that fall?"
The foal of the wild mare whinnies—
  Did he hear the Comanche call?
In the brake by the crawling bayou
  The slinking she-wolves howl;
And the mustang's snort in the river sedge
  Has startled the paddling fowl.

A soft, low tap, and a muffled tap,
And a roll not loud nor long—
We would not break Sant' Anna's nap,
Nor spoil Almonte's song.
Saddles and knives and rifles!
Lord! but the men were glad
When Deaf Smith muttered "Alamo!"
And Karnes hissed "Goliad!"

The drummer tucked his sticks in his belt,
And the fifer gripped his gun.
Oh, for one free, wild, Texan yell,
As we took the slope in a run!
But never a shout nor a shot we spent,
Nor an oath nor a prayer, that day,
Till we faced the bravos, eye to eye,
And then we blazed away.

Then we knew the rapture of Ben Milam,
And the glory that Travis made,
With Bowie's lunge, and Crockett's shot,
And Fannin's dancing blade;
And the heart of the fighter, bounding free
In his joy so hot and mad—
When Millard charged for Alamo,
Lamar for Goliad.

Deaf Smith rode straight, with reeking spur,
Into the shock and rout:
"I've hacked and burned the bayou bridge;
There's no sneak's back-way out!"
Muzzle or butt for Goliad,
Pistol and blade and fist!
Oh, for the knife that never glanced,
And the gun that never missed!

Dulces and cigaritos,
Song and the mandolin!
That gory swamp is a gruesome grove
To dance fandangoes in.
We bridged the bog with the sprawling herd
That fell in that frantic rout;
We slew and slew till the sun set red,
And the Texan star flashed out.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD (1825-1903)

The Witch's Whelp

Along the shore the slimy brine-pits yawn,
Covered with thick green scum; the billows rise,

And fill them to the brim with clouded foam,
And then subside, and leave the scum again.
The ribbèd sand is full of hollow gulfs,
Where monsters from the waters come and lie.
Great serpents bask at noon along the rocks,
To me no terror; coil on coil they roll
Back to their holes before my flying feet.
The Dragon of the Sea, my mother's god,
Enormous Setebos, comes here to sleep;
Him I molest not; when he flaps his wing
A whirlwind rises, when he swims the deep
It threatens to engulf the trembling isle.
Sometimes when winds do blow, and clouds are dark,
I seek the blasted wood whose barkless trunks
Are bleached with summer suns; the creaking trees
Stoop down to me, and swing me right and left
Through crashing limbs, but not a jot care I.
The thunder breaks above, and in their lairs
The panthers roar; from out the stormy clouds
Whose hearts are fire, sharp lightnings rain around
And split the oaks; not faster lizards run
Before the snake up the slant trunks than I,
Not faster down, sliding with hands and feet.
I stamp upon the ground, and adders rouse,
Sharp-eyed, with poisonous fangs; beneath the leaves
They couch, or under rocks, and roots of trees
Felled by the winds; through briery undergrowth
They slide with hissing tongues, beneath my feet
To writhe, or in my fingers squeezed to death.
There is a wild and solitary pine,
Deep in the meadows; all the island birds
From far and near fly there, and learn new songs.
Something imprisoned in its wrinkled bark
Wails for its freedom; when the bigger light
Burns in mid-heaven, and dew elsewhere is dried,
There it still falls; the quivering leaves are tongues,
And load the air with syllables of woe.
One day I thrust my spear within a cleft
No wider than its point, and something shrieked,
And falling cones did pelt me sharp as hail:
I picked the seeds that grew between their plates,
And strung them round my neck with sea-mew eggs.
Hard by are swamps and marshes, reedy fens
Knee-deep in water; monsters wade therein
Thick-set with plated scales; sometimes in troops
They crawl on slippery banks; sometimes they lash
The sluggish waves among themselves at war.
Often I heave great rocks from off the crags,
And crush their bones; often I push my spear

Deep in their drowsy eyes, at which they howl
And chase me inland; then I mount their humps
And prick them back again, unwieldy, slow.
At night the wolves are howling round the place,
And bats sail there athwart the silver light,
Flapping their wings; by day in hollow trees
They hide, and slink into the gloom of dens.
We live, my mother Sycorax and I,
In caves with bloated toads and crested snakes.
She can make charms, and philters, and brew storms,
And call the great Sea Dragon from his deeps.
Nothing of this know I, nor care to know.
Give me the milk of goats in gourds or shells,
The flesh of birds and fish, berries and fruit,
Nor want I more, save all day long to lie,
And hear, as now, the voices of the sea.

A Catch

Once the head is gray,
And the heart is dead,
There's no more to do:
Make the man a bed
Six foot under ground,
There he'll slumber sound.

Golden was my hair,
And my heart did beat
To the viol's voice
Like the dancers' feet.
Not colder now his blood
Who died before the flood.

Fair, and fond, and false,
Mother, wife, and maid,
Never lived a man
They have not betrayed.
None shall 'scape my mirth
But old Mother Earth.

Safely housed with her,
With no company
But my brother Worm,
Who will feed on me,
I shall slumber sound,
Deep down under ground.

The Flight of Youth

There are gains for all our losses
  There are balms for all our pain:
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
  And it never comes again.

We are stronger, and are better,
  Under manhood's sterner reign:
Still we feel that something sweet
Followed youth, with flying feet,
  And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
  And we sigh for it in vain:
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air,
  But it never comes again.

The Jar

Day and night my thoughts incline
To the blandishments of wine:
Jars were made to drain, I think,
Wine, I know, was made to drink.

When I die, (the day be far!)
Should the potters make a jar
Out of this poor clay of mine,
Let the jar be filled with wine!

From "Threescore and Ten"

Who reach their threescore years and ten,
  As I have mine, without a sigh,
Are either more or less than men—
      Not such am I.

I am not of them; life to me
  Has been a strange, bewildering dream,
Wherein I knew not things that be
      From things that seem.

I thought, I hoped, I knew one thing,
  And had one gift, when I was young—

The impulse and the power to sing,
And so I sung.

. . . . . .

They left me here, they left me there,
Went down dark pathways, one by one—
The wise, the great, the young, the fair;
But I went on.

And I go on! And bad or good,
The old allotted years of men
I have endured as best I could,
Threescore and ten!

An Old Song Reversed

"There are gains for all our losses."
So I said when I was young.
If I sang that song again,
'Twould not be with that refrain,
Which but suits an idle tongue.

Youth has gone, and hope gone with it,
Gone the strong desire for fame.
Laurels are not for the old.
Take them, lads. Give Senex gold.
What's an everlasting name?

When my life was in its summer
One fair woman liked my looks:
Now that Time has driven his plough
In deep furrows on my brow,
I'm no more in her good books.

"There are gains for all our losses?"
Grave beside the wintry sea,
Where my child is, and my heart,
For they would not live apart,
What has been your gain to me?

No, the words I sang were idle,
And will ever so remain:
Death, and Age, and vanished Youth
All declare this bitter truth,
There's a loss for every gain!

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER (1826-1864)

My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home;
'Tis summer, the darkeys are gay;

The corn-top's ripe, and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By-'n'-by hard times comes a-knocking at the door:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill, and the shore;
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow, where all was delight;
The time has come when the darkeys have to part:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

The head must bow, and the back will have to bend,
Wherever the darkey may go;
A few more days, and the trouble all will end,
In the field where the sugar-canes grow.
A few more days for to tote the weary load,—
No matter, 'twill never be light;
A few more days till we totter on the road:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

Old Folks at Home

Way down upon de Swanee Ribber,
Far, far away,
Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,
Dere's wha de old folks stay.
All up and down de whole creation
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for de old plantation,
And for de old folks at home.

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam;
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home!

All round de little farm I wandered
When I was young,
Den many happy days I squandered,
Many de songs I sung.
When I was playing wid my brudder,
Happy was I;
Oh, take me to my kind old mudder!
Dere let me live and die.

One little hut among de bushes,
One dat I love,
Still sadly to my memory rushes,
No matter where I rove.
When will I see de bees a-humming
All round de comb?
When will I hear de banjo tumming,
Down in my good old home?

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam,
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home!

Massa's in de Cold Ground

Round de meadows am a-ringing
De darkeys' mournful song,
While de mocking-bird am singing,
Happy as de day am long.
Where de ivy am a-creeping,
O'er de grassy mound,
Dere old massa am a-sleeping,
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground.

Down in de corn-field
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping,—
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

When de autumn leaves were falling,
When de days were cold,
'Twas hard to hear old massa calling,
Cayse he was so weak and old.
Now de orange tree am blooming
On de sandy shore,
Now de summer days am coming,—
Massa nebber calls no more.

Massa make de darkeys love him,
Cayse he was so kind;
Now dey sadly weep above him,
Mourning cayse he leave dem behind.
I cannot work before to-morrow,
Cayse de tear-drop flow;
I try to drive away my sorrow,
Pickin' on de old banjo.

Down in de corn-field
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping,—
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

ROSE TERRY COOKE (1827-1892)

In Vain

Put every tiny robe away!
The stitches all were set with tears,
Slow, tender drops of joys; to-day
Their rain would wither hopes or fears:
Bitter enough to daunt the moth
That longs to fret this dainty cloth.

The filmy lace, the ribbons blue,
The tracery deft of flower and leaf,
The fairy shapes that bloomed and grew
Through happy moments all too brief.
The warm, soft wraps. O God! how cold
It must be in that wintry mould!

Fold carefully the broidered wool:
Its silken wreaths will ne'er grow old,
And lay the linen soft and cool
Above it gently, fold on fold.
So lie the snows on that soft breast,
Where mortal garb will never rest.

How many days in dreamed delight,
With listless fingers, working slow,
I fashioned them from morn till night
And smiled to see them slowly grow.
I thought the task too late begun;
Alas! how soon it all was done!

Go lock them in a cedar chest,
And never bring me back the key!
Will hiding lay this ghost to rest,
Or the turned lock give peace to me?
No matter!—only that I dread
Lest other eyes behold my dead.

I would have laid them in that grave
To perish too, like any weed;
But legends tell that they who save
Such garments, ne'er the like will need:
But give or burn them,—need will be;
I want but one such memory!

ETHEL LYNN BEERS (1827-1879)

All Quiet along the Potomac

"All quiet along the Potomac," they say,
"Except now and then a stray picket
Is shot, as he walks on his beat to and fro,
By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
'Tis nothing—a private or two now and then
Will not count in the news of the battle;
Not an officer lost—only one of the men,
Moaning out, all alone, the death-rattle."

All quiet along the Potomac to-night,
Where the soldiers lie peacefully dreaming;
Their tents in the rays of the clear autumn moon,
Or the light of the watch-fire, are gleaming.
A tremulous sigh of the gentle night-wind
Through the forest leaves softly is creeping;
While stars up above, with their glittering eyes,
Keep guard, for the army is sleeping.

There's only the sound of the lone sentry's tread,
As he tramps from the rock to the fountain,
And thinks of the two in the low trundle-bed
Far away in the cot on the mountain.
His musket falls slack; his face, dark and grim,
Grows gentle with memories tender,
As he mutters a prayer for the children asleep,
For their mother; may Heaven defend her!

The moon seems to shine just as brightly as then,
That night, when the love yet unspoken
Leaped up to his lips—when low-murmured vows
Were pledged to be ever unbroken.

Then drawing his sleeve roughly over his eyes,
He dashes off tears that are welling,
And gathers his gun closer up to its place,
As if to keep down the heart-swelling.

He passes the fountain, the blasted pine-tree,
The footstep is lagging and weary;
Yet onward he goes, through the broad belt of light,
Toward the shade of the forest so dreary.
Hark! was it the night-wind that rustled the leaves?
Was it moonlight so wondrously flashing?
It looked like a rifle . . . "Ha! Mary, good-bye!"
The red life-blood is ebbing and plashing.

All quiet along the Potomac to-night;
No sound save the rush of the river;
While soft falls the dew on the face of the dead—
The picket's off duty forever!

FRANCIS MILES FINCH (1827-1907)

The Blue and the Gray

By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue,
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the laurel, the Blue,
Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the roses, the Blue,
Under the lilies, the Gray.

So with an equal splendor,
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Broidered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Wet with the rain, the Blue,
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE (1827-1916)

The Vagabonds

We are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger's my dog.—Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentleman,—mind your eye!

Over the table,—look out for the lamp!
The rogue is growing a little old;

Five years we've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank—and starved—together.

We've learned what comfort is, I tell you!
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This out-door business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir,—I never drink;
Roger and I are exceedingly moral,—
Aren't we, Roger?—See him wink!—
Well, something hot, then,—we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too,—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk!
He understands every word that's said,—
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I've not lost the respect
(Here's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And this old coat, with its empty pockets,
And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There isn't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable, thankless master!
No, Sir!—see him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But no matter!

We'll have some music, if you're willing,
And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
Shall march a little— Start, you villain!
Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel shakes
When he stands up to hear his sentence.
Now tell us how many drams it takes
To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps,—that's five; he's mighty knowing!
The night's before us, fill the glasses!—
Quick, Sir! I'm ill,—my brain is going!—
Some brandy,—thank you,—there!—it passes!

Why not reform? That's easily said;
But I've gone through such wretched treatment,
Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
And scarce remembering what meat meant,
That my poor stomach's past reform;
And there are times when, mad with thinking,
I'd sell out heaven for something warm
To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think?
At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
A dear girl's love,—but I took to drink,—
The same old story; you know how it ends.
If you could have seen these classic features,—
You needn't laugh, Sir; they were not then
Such a burning libel on God's creatures:
I was one of your handsome men!

If you had seen *her*, so fair and young,
Whose head was happy on this breast!
If you could have heard the songs I sung
When the wine went round, you wouldn't have guessed
That ever I, Sir, should be straying
From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
Ragged and penniless, and playing
To you to-night for a glass of grog!

She's married since,—a parson's wife:
'Twas better for her that we should part,—
Better the soberest, prosiest life
Than a blasted home and a broken heart.
I have seen her? Once: I was weak and spent
On the dusty road: a carriage stopped:
But little she dreamed, as on she went,
Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped!

You've set me talking, Sir; I'm sorry;
It makes me wild to think of the change!
What do you care for a beggar's story?
Is it amusing? you find it strange?

I had a mother so proud of me!
'Twas well she died before.—Do you know
If the happy spirits in heaven can see
The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain; then Roger and I will start.
I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
Aching thing in place of a heart?
He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,
No doubt remembering things that were,—
A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I'm better now; that glass was warming.—
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.—
Not a very gay life to lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink:—
The sooner, the better for Roger and me!

Midwinter

The speckled sky is dim with snow,
The light flakes falter and fall slow;
Athwart the hill-top, rapt and pale,
Silently drops a silvery veil;
And all the valley is shut in
By flickering curtains gray and thin.

But cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree;
The snow sails round him as he sings,
White as the down of angels' wings.

I watch the snowflakes as they fall
On bank and brier and broken wall;
Over the orchard, waste and brown,
All noiselessly they settle down,
Tipping the apple-boughs, and each
Light quivering twig of plum and peach.
On turf and curb and bower-roof
The snow-storm spreads its ivory woof;
It paves with pearl the garden-walk;
And lovingly round tattered stalk
And shivering stem its magic weaves
A mantle fair as lily-leaves.

The hooded beehive, small and low,
Stands like a maiden in the snow;
And the old door-slab is half hid
Under an alabaster lid.

All day it snows: the sheeted post
Gleams in the dimness like a ghost;
All day the blasted oak has stood
A muffled wizard of the wood;
Garland and airy cap adorn
The sumach and the wayside thorn,
And clustering spangles lodge and shine
In the dark tresses of the pine.

The ragged bramble, dwarfed and old,
Shrinks like a beggar in the cold;
In surplice white the cedar stands,
And blesses him with priestly hands.

Still cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree:
But in my inmost ear is heard
The music of a holier bird;
And heavenly thoughts as soft and white
As snow-flakes, on my soul alight,
Clothing with love my lonely heart,
Healing with peace each bruisëd part,
Till all my being seems to be
Transfigured by their purity.

CLARENCE CHATHAM COOK (1828-1900)

On One Who Died in May

Why, Death, what dost thou here,
This time o' year?
Peach-blow and apple-blossom;
Clouds, white as my love's bosom;
Warm wind o' the west
Cradling the robin's nest;
Young meadows hasting their green laps to fill
With golden dandelion and daffodil:
These are fit sights for spring;
But, oh, thou hateful thing,
What dost thou here?

Why, Death, what dost thou here,
This time o' year?
Fair, at the old oak's knee,
The young anemone;
Fair, the plash places set
With dog-tooth violet;
The first sloop-sail,
The shad-flower pale;
Sweet are all sights,
Sweet are all sounds of spring;
But thou, thou ugly thing,
What dost thou here?

Dark Death let fall a tear.
Why am I here?
Oh, heart ungrateful! Will man never know
I am his friend, nor ever was his foe?
Whose the sweet season, if it be not mine?
Mine, not the bobolink's, that song divine,
Chasing the shadows o'er the flying wheat!
'Tis a dead voice, not his, that sounds so sweet.
Whose passionate heart burns in this flaming rose
But his whose passionate heart long since lay still?
Whose wan hope pales this snowlike lily tall,
Beside the garden wall,
But his whose radiant eyes and lily grace
Sleep in the grave that crowns yon tufted hill?

All hope, all memory,
Have their deep springs in me;
And love, that else might fade,
By me immortal made,
Spurns at the grave, leaps to the welcoming skies,
And burns a steadfast star to steadfast eyes.

HENRY TIMROD (1829-1867)

Quatorzain

Most men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.

Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible god, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!

SILAS WEIR MITCHELL (1829-1914)

On a Boy's First Reading of "King Henry V"

When youth was lord of my unchallenged fate,
And time seemed but the vassal of my will,
I entertained certain guests of state—
The great of older days, who, faithful still,
Have kept with me the pact my youth had made.

And I remember how one galleon rare
From the far distance of a time long dead
Came on the wings of a fair-fortuned air,
With sound of martial music heralded,
In blazonry of storied shields arrayed.

So the *Great Harry* with high trumpetings,
The wind of victory in her burly sails!
And all her deck with clang of armor rings:
And under-flown the Lily standard trails,
And over-flown the royal Lions ramp.

The waves she rode are strewn with silent wrecks,
Her proud sea-comrades once; but ever yet
Comes time-defying laughter from her decks,
Where stands the lion-lord Plantagenet,
Large-hearted, merry, king of court and camp.

Sail on! sail on! The fatal blasts of time
That spared so few, shall thee with joy escort;
And with the stormy thunder of thy rhyme
Shalt thou salute full many a centuried port
With "Ho! for Harry and red Agincourt!"

A Decanter of Madeira, Aged 86, to George Bancroft, Aged 86, Greeting

Good Master, you and I were born
In "Teacup days" of hoop and hood,
And when the silver cue hung down,
And toasts were drunk, and wine was good;

When kin of mine (a jolly brood)
From sideboards looked, and knew full well
What courage they had given the beau,
How generous made the blushing belle.

Ah me! what gossip could I prate
Of days when doors were locked at dinners!
Believe me, I have kissed the lips
Of many pretty saints—or sinners.

Lip service have I done, alack!
I don't repent, but come what may,
What ready lips, sir, I have kissed,
Be sure at least I shall not say.

Two honest gentlemen are we,—
I Demi John, whole George are you;
When Nature grew us one in years
She meant to make a generous brew.

She bade me store for festal hours
The sun our south-side vineyard knew;
To sterner tasks she set your life,
As statesman, writer, scholar, grew.

Years eighty-six have come and gone;
At last we meet. Your health to-night.
Take from this board of friendly hearts
The memory of a proud delight.

The days that went have made you wise,
There's wisdom in my rare bouquet.
I'm rather paler than I was;
And, on my soul, you're growing gray.

I like to think, when Toper Time
Has drained the last of me and you,
Some here shall say, They both were good,—
The wine we drank, the man we knew.

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

Life

Our share of night to bear,
Our share of morning,
Our blank in bliss to fill,
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
Some lose their way.
Here a mist, and there a mist,
Afterwards—day!

Parting

My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell:
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Called Back

Just lost when I was saved!
Just felt the world go by!
Just girt me for the onset with eternity,
When breath blew back
And on the other side
I heard recede the disappointed tide!

Therefore, as one returned, I feel,
Odd secrets of the line to tell!
Some sailor, skirting foreign shores,
Some pale reporter from the awful doors
Before the seal!

Next time, to stay!
Next time, the things to see
By ear unheard,
Unscrutinized by eye.

Next time, to tarry,
While the ages steal,—
Slow tramp the centuries,
And the cycles wheel.

Constant

Alter? When the hills do.
Falter? When the sun
Question if his glory
Be the perfect one.

Surfeit? When the daffodil
Doth of the dew:
Even as herself, O friend!
I will of you!

Heart, We Will Forget Him

Heart, we will forget him!
You and I, to-night!
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

Chartless

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

Beauty Crowds Me

Beauty crowds me till I die,
Beauty, mercy have on me!
Yet if I expire to-day
Let it be in sight of thee!

Eternity

On this wondrous sea,
Sailing silently,
Ho! pilot, ho!
Knowest thou the shore
Where no breakers roar,
Where the storm is o'er?

In the silent west
Many sails at rest,
  Their anchors fast;
Thither I pilot thee,—
Land, ho! Eternity!
  Ashore at last!

HELEN HUNT JACKSON (1831-1885)

Poppies in the Wheat

Along Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,
A tropic tide of air, with ebb and flow
Bathes all the fields of wheat until they glow
Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat
Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet
Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro
To mark the shore. The farmer does not know
That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,
Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,
But I,—I smile to think that days remain
Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet
No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,
I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

Habeas Corpus

My body, eh? Friend Death, how now?
  Why all this tedious pomp of writ?
Thou hast reclaimed it sure and slow
  For half a century, bit by bit.

In faith thou knowest more to-day
  Than I do, where it can be found!
This shriveled lump of suffering clay,
  To which I now am chained and bound,

Has not of kith or kin a trace
  To the good body once I bore;
Look at this shrunken, ghastly face:
  Didst ever see that face before?

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art;
  Thy only fault thy lagging gait,
Mistaken pity in thy heart
  For timorous ones that bid thee wait.

Do quickly all thou hast to do,
  Nor I nor mine will hindrance make;
I shall be free when thou art through;
  I grudge thee naught that thou must take!

Stay! I have lied: I grudge thee one,
  Yes, two I grudge thee at this last,—
Two members which have faithful done
  My will and bidding in the past.

I grudge thee this right hand of mine;
  I grudge thee this quick-beating heart;
They never gave me coward sign,
  Nor played me once a traitor's part.

I see now why in olden days
  Men in barbaric love or hate
Nailed enemies' hands at wild crossways,
  Shrined leaders' hearts in costly state:

The symbol, sign, and instrument
  Of each soul's purpose, passion, strife,
Of fires in which are poured and spent
  Their all of love, their all of life.

O feeble, mighty human hand!
  O fragile, dauntless human heart!
The universe holds nothing planned
  With such sublime, transcendent art!

Yes, Death, I own I grudge thee mine
  Poor little hand, so feeble now;
Its wrinkled palm, its altered line,
  Its veins so pallid and so slow—

[Unfinished here.]

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art:
  I shall be free when thou art through.
Take all there is—take hand and heart:
  There must be somewhere work to do.
[Her last poem: 7 August, 1885.]

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1831-1886)

Between the Sunken Sun and the New Moon

Between the sunken sun and the new moon,
I stood in fields through which a rivulet ran

With scarce perceptible motion, not a span
Of its smooth surface trembling to the tune
Of sunset breezes: "O delicious boon,"
I cried, "of quiet! wise is Nature's plan,
Who, in her realm, as in the soul of man,
Alternates storm with calm, and the loud noon
With dewy evening's soft and sacred lull:
Happy the heart that keeps *its* twilight hour,
And, in the depths of heavenly peace reclined,
Loves to commune with thoughts of tender power;
Thoughts that ascend, like angels beautiful,
A shining Jacob's ladder of the mind."

A Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet

A little while (my life is almost set!)
I fain would pause along the downward way,
Musing an hour in this sad sunset-ray,
While, Sweet! our eyes with tender tears are wet:
A little hour I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger yet,
All for love's sake, for love that cannot tire;
Though fervid youth be dead, with youth's desire,
And hope has faded to a vague regret,
A little while I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger here:
Behold! who knows what strange, mysterious bars
'Twixt souls that love may rise in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

A little while I yearn to hold thee fast,
Hand locked in hand, and loyal heart to heart;
(O pitying Christ! those woeful words, "We part!")
So ere the darkness fall, the light be past,
A little while I fain would hold thee fast.

A little while, when light and twilight meet,—
Behind, our broken years; before, the deep
Weird wonder of the last unfathomed sleep,—
A little while I still would clasp thee, Sweet,
A little while, when night and twilight meet.

A little while I fain would linger here;
Behold! who knows what soul-dividing bars
Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN (1832-1911)

In a Garret

This realm is sacred to the silent past;
  Within its drowsy shades are treasures rare
Of dust and dreams; the years are long since last
  A stranger's footfall pressed the creaking stair.

This room no housewife's tidy hand disturbs;
  And here, like some strange presence, ever clings
A homesick smell of dry forgotten herbs,—
  A musty odor as of mouldering things.

Here stores of withered roots and leaves repose,
  For fancied virtues prized in days of yore,
Gathered with thoughtful care, mayhap by those
  Whose earthly ills are healed forever more.

Here shy Arachne winds her endless thread,
  And weaves her silken tapestry unseen,
Veiling the rough-hewn timbers overhead,
  And looping gossamer festoons between.

Along the low joists of the sloping roof,
  Moth-eaten garments hang, a gloomy row,
Like tall fantastic ghosts, which stand aloof,
  Holding grim converse with the long ago.

Here lie remembrancers of childish joys,—
  Old fairy-volumes, conned and conned again,
A cradle, and a heap of battered toys,
  Once loved by babes who now are bearded men.

Here, in the summer, at a broken pane,
  The yellow wasps come in, and buzz and build
Among the rafters; wind and snow and rain
  All enter, as the seasons are fulfilled.

This mildewed chest, behind the chimney, holds
  Old letters, stained and nibbled; faintly show
The faded phrases on the tattered folds
  Once kissed, perhaps, or tear-wet—who may know.

I turn a page like one who plans a crime,
  And lo! love's prophecies and sweet regrets,
A tress of chestnut hair, a love-lorn rhyme,
  And fragrant dust that once was violets.

I wonder if the small sleek mouse, that shaped
His winter nest between these time-stained beams,
Was happier that his bed was lined and draped
With the bright warp and woof of youthful dreams?

Here where the gray incessant spiders spin,
Shrouding from view the sunny world outside,
A golden bumblebee has blundered in
And lost the way to liberty, and died.

So the lost present drops into the past;
So the warm living heart, that loves the light,
Faints in the unresponsive darkness vast
Which hides time's buried mysteries from sight.

Why rob these shadows of their sacred trust?
Let the thick cobwebs hide the day once more;
Leave the dead years to silence and to dust,
And close again the long unopened door.

MARY ASHLEY TOWNSEND (1832-1901)

Down the Bayou

The cypress swamp around me wraps its spell,
With hushing sounds in moss-hung branches there,
Like congregations rustling down to prayer,
While Solitude, like some unsounded bell,
Hangs full of secrets that it cannot tell,
And leafy litanies on the humid air
Intone themselves, and on the tree-trunks bare
The scarlet lichen writes her rubrics well.
The cypress-knees take on them marvellous shapes
Of pigmy nuns, gnomes, goblins, witches, fays,
The vigorous vine the withered gum-tree drapes,
Across the oozy ground the rabbit plays,
The moccasin to jungle depths escapes,
And through the gloom the wild deer shyly gaze.

JOHN ALBEE (1833-1915)

Landor

Come, Walter Savage Landor, come this way;
Step through the lintel low, with prose or verse,
Tallest of latter men; the early star
And latest setting sun of great compeers;
Through youth, through manhood, and extremest age,
Strong at the root, and at the top, blossoms
Perennial. When culled the fields around

Still calling up the great for wisest talk,
Or singing clear some fresh, melodious stave,
Not sickly-sweet, but like ripe autumn fruit,
Of which not one but all the senses taste,
And leave uncloyed the dainty appetite.
Great English master of poetic art,
In these late times that dandle every muse,
Here mayst thou air all day thine eloquence,
And I a never weary listener,
If thou at eve wilt sing one witty song,
Or chant some line of cadenced, classic hymn.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (1833-1908)

Pan in Wall Street

Just where the Treasury's marble front
  Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations;
Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
  To throng for trade and last quotations;
Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
  Outrival, in the ears of people,
The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
  From Trinity's undaunted steeple,—

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
  Sound high above the modern clamor,
Above the cries of greed and gain,
  The curbstone war, the auction's hammer;
And swift, on Music's misty ways,
  It led, from all this strife for millions,
To ancient, sweet-do-nothing days
  Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
  And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
I saw the minstrel, where he stood
  At ease against a Doric pillar:
One hand a droning organ played,
  The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
Like those of old) to lips that made
  The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'Twas Pan himself had wandered here
  A-strolling through this sordid city,
And piping to the civic ear
  The prelude of some pastoral ditty!

The demigod had crossed the seas,—
From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
And Syracusan times,—to these
Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head;
But—hidden thus—there was no doubting
That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
His gnarlëd horns were somewhere sprouting;
His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,
Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
And trousers, patched of divers hues,
Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound,
And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
And with his goat's-eye looked around
Where'er the passing current drifted;
And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
As erst, if pastorals be true,
Came beasts from every wooded valley;
The random passers stayed to list,—
A boxer Ægon, rough and merry,
A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
With Nais at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
In tattered cloak of army pattern,
And Galatea joined the throng,—
A blowsy, apple-vending slattern;
While old Silenus staggered out
From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,
And bade the piper, with a shout,
To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy!

A newsboy and a peanut-girl
Like little Fauns began to caper:
His hair was all in tangled curl,
Her tawny legs were bare and taper;
And still the gathering larger grew,
And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
With throbs her vernal passion taught her,—
Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
Or by the Arethusan water!
New forms may fold the speech, new lands
Arise within these ocean-portals,
But Music waves eternal wands,—
Enchantress of the souls of mortals!

So thought I,—but among us trod
A man in blue, with legal baton,
And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
And pushed him from the step I sat on.
Doubting I mused upon the cry,
"Great Pan is dead!"—and all the people
Went on their ways:—and clear and high
The quarter sounded from the steeple.

CHARLES HENRY WEBB (1834-1905)

Dum Vivimus Vigilamus

Turn out more ale, turn up the light;
I will not go to bed to-night.
Of all the foes that man should dread
The first and worst one is a bed.
Friends I have had both old and young,
And ale we drank and songs we sung:
Enough you know when this is said,
That, one and all,—they died in bed.
In bed they died and I'll not go
Where all my friends have perished so.
Go you who glad would buried be,
But not to-night a bed for me.

For me to-night no bed prepare,
But set me out my oaken chair.
And bid no other guests beside
The ghosts that shall around me glide;
In curling smoke-wreaths I shall see
A fair and gentle company.
Though silent all, rare revellers they,
Who leave you not till break of day.
Go you who would not daylight see,
But not to-night a bed for me:
For I've been born and I've been wed—
All of man's peril comes of bed.

And I'll not seek—whate'er befall—
Him who unbidden comes to all.
A grewsome guest, a lean-jawed wight—
God send he do not come to-night!
But if he do, to claim his own,
He shall not find me lying prone;
But blithely, bravely, sitting up,
And raising high the stirrup-cup.
Then if you find a pipe unfilled,
An empty chair, the brown ale spilled;
Well may you know, though naught be said,
That I've been borne away to bed.

GEORGE ARNOLD (1834-1865)

Beer

Here,
With my beer
I sit,
While golden moments flit:
Alas!
They pass
Unheeded by:
And, as they fly,
I,
Being dry,
Sit, idly sipping here
My beer.

O, finer far
Than fame, or riches, are
The graceful smoke-wreaths of this free cigar!
Why
Should I
Weep, wail, or sigh?
What if luck has passed me by?
What if my hopes are dead,—
My pleasures fled?
Have I not still
My fill
Of right good cheer,—
Cigars and beer?

Go, whining youth,
Forsooth!
Go, weep and wail,
Sigh and grow pale,
On the old times,
Weave melancholy rhymes

Whose joys like shadowy ghosts appear,
But leave to me my beer!
  Gold is dross,—
  Love is loss,—
So, if I gulp my sorrows down,
Or see them drown
In foamy draughts of old nut-brown,
Then do I wear the crown,
  Without the cross!

HARRIET McEWEN KIMBALL (1834-1917)

The Guest

Speechless Sorrow sat with me;
I was sighing wearily;
Lamp and fire were out; the rain
Wildly beat the window-pane.
In the dark I heard a knock,
And a hand was on the lock;
One in waiting spake to me,
  Saying sweetly,
"I am come to sup with thee."

All my room was dark and damp:
"Sorrow," said I, "trim the lamp,
Light the fire, and cheer thy face,
Set the guest-chair in its place."
And again I heard the knock;
In the dark I found the lock:—
"Enter, I have turned the key;
  Enter, Stranger,
Who art come to sup with me."

Opening wide the door he came,
But I could not speak his name;
In the guest-chair took his place,
But I could not see his face.
When my cheerful fire was beaming,
When my little lamp was gleaming,
And the feast was spread for three,
  Lo, my MASTER
Was the Guest that supped with me!

JOHN JAMES PIATT (1835-?)

Torch-Light in Autumn

I lift this sumach-bough with crimson flare,
  And, touched with subtle pangs of dreamy pain,
Through the dark wood a torch I seem to bear
  In Autumn's funeral train.

CELIA THAXTER (1835-1894)

The Sandpiper

Across the narrow beach we flit,
  One little sandpiper and I,
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
  The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
  The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,—
  One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
  Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
  Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
  I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,—
  One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
  Uttering his sweet and mournful cry.
He starts not at my fitful song,
  Or flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
  He scans me with a fearless eye:
Staunch friends are we, well tried and strong,
  The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
  When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
  To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
  The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
  Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON (1835-1908)

Hic Jacet

So Love is dead that has been quick so long!
Close, then, his eyes, and bear him to his rest,

With eglantine and myrtle on his breast,
And leave him there, their pleasant scents among;
And chant a sweet and melancholy song
About the charms whereof he was possessed,
And how of all things he was loveliest,
And to compare with aught were him to wrong.
Leave him beneath the still and solemn stars,
That gather and look down from their far place
With their long calm our brief woes to deride,
Until the Sun the Morning's gate unbars
And mocks, in turn, our sorrows with his face;—
And yet, had Love been Love, he had not died.

Were but My Spirit Loosed upon the Air

Were but my spirit loosed upon the air——
By some High Power who could Life's chains unbind,
Set free to seek what most it longs to find—
To no proud Court of Kings would I repair:
I would but climb, once more, a narrow stair,
When day was wearing late, and dusk was kind;
And one should greet me to my failings blind,
Content so I but shared his twilight there.

Nay! well I know he waits not as of old—
I could not find him in the old-time place—
I must pursue him, made by sorrow bold,
Through worlds unknown, in strange celestial race,
Whose mystic round no traveller has told,
From star to star, until I see his face.

Love's Resurrection Day

Round among the quiet graves,
When the sun was low,
Love went grieving,—Love who saves:
Did the sleepers know?

At his touch the flowers awoke,
At his tender call
Birds into sweet singing broke,
And it did befall

From the blooming, bursting sod
All Love's dead arose,
And went flying up to God
By a way Love knows.

IRVING BROWNE (1835-1899)

My New World

My prow is tending toward the west,
Old voices growing faint, dear faces dim,
And all that I have loved the best
Far back upon the waste of memory swim.
My old world disappears:
Few hopes and many fears
Accompany me.

But from the distance fair
A sound of birds, a glimpse of pleasant skies,
A scent of fragrant air,
All soothingly arise
In cooing voice, sweet breath, and merry eyes
Of grandson on my knee.
And ere my sails be furled,
Kind Lord, I pray
Thou let me live a day
In my new world.

Man's Pillow

A baby lying on his mother's breast
Draws life from that sweet fount;
He takes his rest
And heaves deep sighs;
With brooding eyes
Of soft content

She shelters him within that fragrant nest,
And scarce refrains from crushing him
With tender violence,
His rosebud mouth, each rosy limb
Excite such joy intense;
Rocked on that gentle billow,
She sings into his ear
A song that angels stoop to hear.
Blest child and mother doubly blest!
Such his first pillow.

A man outwearied with the world's mad race
His mother seeks again;
His furrowed face,
His tired gray head,
His heart of lead
Resigned he yields;

She covers him in some secluded place,
And kindly heals the earthy scar
Of spade with snow and flowers,
While glow of sun and gleam of star,
And murmuring rush of showers,
And wind-obeying willow
Attend his unbroken sleep;
In this repose secure and deep,
Forgotten save by One, he leaves no trace.
Such his last pillow.

FRANCES LAUGHTON MACE (1836-1899)

Alcyone

I

Among the thousand, thousand spheres that roll,
Wheel within wheel, through never-ending space,
A mighty and interminable race,
Yet held by some invisible control,
And led as to a sure and shining goal,
One star alone, with still, unchanging face,
Looks out from her perpetual dwelling-place,
Of these swift orbs the centre and the soul.
Beyond the moons that beam, the stars that blaze,
Past fields of ether, crimson, violet, rose,
The vast star-garden of eternity,
Behold! it shines with white immaculate rays,
The home of peace, the haven of repose,
The lotus-flower of heaven, Alcyone.

II

It is the place where life's long dream comes true;
On many another swift and radiant star
Gather the flaming hosts of those who war
With powers of darkness; those stray seraphs, too,
Who hasten forth God's ministries to do:
But here no sounds of eager trumpets mar
The subtler spell which calls the soul from far,
Its wasted springs of gladness to renew.
It is the morning land of the Ideal,
Where smiles, transfigured to the raptured sight,
The joy whose flitting semblance now we see;
Where we shall know, as visible and real,
Our life's deep aspiration, old yet new,
In the sky-splendor of Alcyone.

III

What lies beyond we ask not. In that hour
When first our feet that shore of beauty press,
It is enough of heaven, its sweet success,
To find our own. Not yet we crave the dower
Of grander action and sublimer power;
We are content that life's long loneliness
Finds in love's welcoming its rich redress,
And hopes, deep hidden, burst in perfect flower.
Wait for me there, O loved of many days!
Though with warm beams some beckoning planet glows,
Its dawning triumphs keep, to share with me:
For soon, far winging through the starry maze,
Past fields of ether, crimson, violet, rose,
I follow, follow to Alcyone!

WILLIAM WINTER (1836-1917)

From "Arthur"

Thou idol of my constant heart,
  Thou child of perfect love and light,
That sudden from my side didst part,
  And vanish in the sea of night,
Through whatsoever tempests blow
My weary soul with thine would go.

Say, if thy spirit yet have speech,
  What port lies hid within the pall,
What shore death's gloomy billows reach,
  Or if they reach no shore at all!
One word—one little word—to tell
That thou art safe and all is well!

The anchors of my earthly fate,
  As they were cast so must they cling;
And naught is now to do but wait
  The sweet release that time will bring,
When all these mortal moorings break,
For one last voyage I must make.

Say that across the shuddering dark—
  And whisper that the hour is near—
Thy hand will guide my shattered bark

Till mercy's radiant coasts appear,
Where I shall clasp thee to my breast,
And know once more the name of rest.

Heaven's Hour

Can I forget?—no, never, while my soul
Lives to remember that imperial night
When through the spectral church I heard them roll,
Those organ tones of glory, and my sight
Grew dim with tears, while ever new delight
Throbbed in my heart, and through the shadowy dread
The pale ghosts wandered, and a deathly chill
Froze all my being,—the mysterious thrill
That tells the awful presence of the dead!
Yet not the dead, but strayed from heavenly bowers,
Pure souls that live with other lives than ours:
For sure I am that ecstasy of sound
Lured one sweet spirit from his holy ground,
Who dwells in the perpetual land of flowers.

SARAH MORGAN BRYAN PIATT (1836-1919)

The Witch in the Glass

"My mother says I must not pass
Too near that glass;
She is afraid that I will see
A little witch that looks like me,
With a red, red mouth to whisper low
The very thing I should not know!"

"Alack for all your mother's care!
A bird of the air,
A wistful wind, or (I suppose
Sent by some hapless boy) a rose,
With breath too sweet, will whisper low
The very thing you should not know!"

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1837-1907)

Heredity

A soldier of the Cromwell stamp,
With sword and psalm-book by his side,

At home alike in church and camp:
Austere he lived, and smileless died.

But she, a creature soft and fine—
From Spain, some say, some say from France;
Within her veins leapt blood like wine—
She led her Roundhead lord a dance!

In Grantham church they lie asleep;
Just where, the verger may not know.
Strange that two hundred years should keep
The old ancestral fires aglow!

In me these two have met again;
To each my nature owes a part:
To one, the cool and reasoning brain;
To one, the quick, unreasoning heart.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837-1920)

Sometimes, When after Spirited Debate

Sometimes, when after spirited debate
Of letters or affairs, in thought I go
Smiling unto myself, and all aglow
With some immediate purpose, and elate
As if my little, trivial scheme were great,

And what I would so were already so:
Suddenly I think of her that died, and know,
Whatever friendly or unfriendly fate
Befall me in my hope or in my pride,
It is all nothing but a mockery,
And nothing can be what it used to be,
When I could bid my happy life abide,
And build on earth for perpetuity,
Then, in the deathless days before she died.

JOHN BURROUGHS (1837-1921)

Waiting

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
  Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate.
  For, lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN HAY (1838-1905)

Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint,—them engineers
Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—
A thousand times he swore
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she come tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint,—but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

JAMES RYDER RANDALL (1839-1908)

From "My Maryland"

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland, my Maryland!

. . . . . .

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;

Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come!
She'll come!
Maryland, my Maryland!

ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN (1839-1888)

The Conquered Banner

Furl that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary:
Furl it, fold it,—it is best;
For there's not a man to wave it,
And there's not a sword to save it,
And there's not one left to lave it
In the blood which heroes gave it,
And its foes now scorn and brave it:
Furl it, hide it,—let it rest!

Take that Banner down! 'tis tattered;
Broken is its staff and shattered;
And the valiant hosts are scattered,
Over whom it floated high.
Oh, 'tis hard for us to fold it,
Hard to think there's none to hold it,
Hard that those who once unrolled it
Now must furl it with a sigh!

Furl that Banner—furl it sadly!
Once ten thousands hailed it gladly,
And ten thousands wildly, madly,
Swore it should forever wave;
Swore that foeman's sword should never
Hearts like theirs entwined dissever,
Till that flag should float forever
O'er their freedom or their grave!

Furl it! for the hands that grasped it,
And the hearts that fondly clasped it,
Cold and dead are lying low;
And that Banner—it is trailing,
While around it sounds the wailing
Of its people in their woe.

For, though conquered, they adore it,—
Love the cold, dead hands that bore it,
Weep for those who fell before it,

Pardon those who trailed and tore it;
And oh, wildly they deplore it,
Now to furl and fold it so!

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story
Though its folds are in the dust!
For its fame on brightest pages,
Penned by poets and by sages,
Shall go sounding down the ages—
Furl its folds though now we must.

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly!
Treat it gently—it is holy,
For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not—unfold it never;
Let it droop there, furled forever,—
For its people's hopes are fled!

FRANCIS BRET HARTE (1839-1902)

Dickens in Camp

(1812-1870)

Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow.

The roaring camp-fire, with rude humor, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure,
To hear the tale anew.

And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of "Little Nell."

Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy,—for the reader
Was youngest of them all,—

But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp, with "Nell," on English meadows
Wandered and lost their way.

And so in mountain solitudes—o'ertaken
As by some spell divine—
Their cares dropped from them like the needles shaken
From out the gusty pine.

Lost is that camp, and wasted all its fire:
And he who wrought that spell?—
Ah! towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

Lost is that camp, but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines incense all the pensive glory
That fills the Kentish hills.

And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreathes entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly—
This spray of Western pine!

Plain Language from Truthful James
(*Table Mountain*, 1870)

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar:
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike.
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred

That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled, as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed,
Like the leaves on the strand,
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,

And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

The Society upon the Stanislaus

I reside at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James;
I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful games;
And I'll tell in simple language what I know about the row
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

But first I would remark, that it is not a proper plan
For any scientific gent to whale his fellow-man,
And, if a member don't agree with his peculiar whim,
To lay for that same member for to "put a head" on him.

Now nothing could be finer or more beautiful to see
Than the first six months' proceedings of that same Society,
Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil bones
That he found within a tunnel near the tenement of Jones.

Then Brown he read a paper, and he reconstructed there,
From those same bones, an animal that was extremely rare;
And Jones then asked the Chair for a suspension of the rules,
Till he could prove that those same bones was one of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said he was at fault,—
It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's family vault:
He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr. Brown,
And on several occasions he had cleaned out the town.

Now I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent
To say another is an ass,—at least, to all intent;
Nor should the individual who happens to be meant
Reply by heaving rocks at him, to any great extent.

Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of order—when
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen,
And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

For, in less time than I write it, every member did engage
In a warfare with the remnants of a palæozoic age;
And the way they heaved those fossils in their anger was a sin,
Till the skull of an old mammoth caved the head of Thompson in.

And this is all I have to say of these improper games,
For I live at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James;
And I've told in simple language what I know about the row
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

"Jim"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some of you chaps
Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim,—
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—
Well, that is strange:
Why, it's two year
Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
Eh?
The h—— you say!
Dead?
That little cuss?
What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
'S glass in yer shop

But you must r'ar?
It wouldn't take
D——d much to break
You and your bar.

Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-by.
No more, sir—I——
Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim!

What the Bullet Sang

O joy of creation
To be!
O rapture to fly
And be free!
Be the battle lost or won,
Though its smoke shall hide the sun,
I shall find my love,—the one
Born for me!
I shall know him where he stands,
All alone,
With the power in his hands
Not o'erthrown;
I shall know him by his face,
By his godlike front and grace;
I shall hold him for a space,
All my own!

It is he—O my love!
So bold!
It is I—all thy love
Foretold!
It is I. O love! what bliss!

Dost thou answer to my kiss?
O sweetheart! what is this
Lieth there so cold?

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841-1887)

The Fool's Prayer

The royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool:
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

JOAQUIN MILLER (1841-1913)

Crossing the Plains

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,
That turned so low and sad to you,
That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seemed to plead, and make replies,
The while they bowed their necks and drew
The creaking load; and looked at you.
Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crushed the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepped and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

Twilight at the Heights

The brave young city by the Balboa seas
Lies compassed about by the hosts of night—
Lies humming, low, like a hive of bees;
And the day lies dead. And its spirit's flight
Is far to the west; while the golden bars
That bound it are broken to a dust of stars.

Come under my oaks, oh, drowsy dusk!
The wolf and the dog; dear incense hour
When Mother Earth hath a smell of musk,

And things of the spirit assert their power—
When candles are set to burn in the west—
Set head and foot to the day at rest.

Dead in the Sierras

His footprints have failed us,
Where berries are red,
And madroños are rankest,—
The hunter is dead!

The grizzly may pass
By his half-open door;
May pass and repass
On his path, as of yore;

The panther may crouch
In the leaves on his limb;
May scream and may scream,—
It is nothing to him.

Prone, bearded, and breasted
Like columns of stone;
And tall as a pine—
As a pine overthrown!

His camp-fires gone,
What else can be done
Than let him sleep on
Till the light of the sun?

Ay, tombless! what of it?
Marble is dust,
Cold and repellent;
And iron is rust.

Columbus

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores;
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Adm'r'l, speak! What shall I say?"
"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly, wan and weak.
The stout mate thought of home; a spray

Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day:
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say——"
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
He lifts his teeth as if to bite!
Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then pale and worn, he paced his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! A light! At last a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

The Defense of the Alamo

Santa Ana came storming, as a storm might come;
There was rumble of cannon; there was rattle of blade;
There was cavalry, infantry, bugle and drum—
Full seven proud thousand in pomp and parade,
The chivalry, flower of all Mexico;
And a gaunt two hundred in the Alamo!

And thirty lay sick, and some were shot through;
For the siege had been bitter, and bloody, and long.
"Surrender, or die!"—"Men, what will *you* do?"
And Travis, great Travis, drew sword, quick and strong;
Drew a line at his feet. . . . "Will you come? Will you go?
I die with my wounded, in the Alamo."

Then Bowie gasped, "Guide me over that line!"
Then Crockett, one hand to the sick, one hand to his gun,
Crossed with him; then never a word or a sign
Till all, sick or well, all, all, save but one,
One man. Then a woman stopped praying, and slow
Across, to die with the heroes of the Alamo.

Then that one coward fled, in the night, in that night,
When all men silently prayed and thought
Of home; of tomorrow; of God and the right;
Till dawn; then Travis sent his single last cannon-shot,
In answer to insolent Mexico,
From the old bell-tower of the Alamo.

Then came Santa Ana; a crescent of flame:
Then the red *escalade;* then the fight hand to hand:
Such an unequal fight as never had name
Since the Persian hordes butchered that doomed Spartan band.
All day—all day and all night, and the morning? so slow,
Through the battle smoke mantling the Alamo.

Then silence! Such silence! Two thousand lay dead
In a crescent outside! And within? Not a breath
Save the gasp of a woman, with gory, gashed head,
All alone, with her dead there, waiting for death;
And she but a nurse. Yet when shall we know
Another like this of the Alamo?

Shout "Victory, victory, victory ho!"
I say, 'tis not always with the hosts that win;
I say that the victory, high or low,
Is given the hero who grapples with sin,
Or legion or single; just asking to know
When duty fronts death in his Alamo.

KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD (1841—)

Driving Home the Cows

Out of the clover and blue-eyed grass
He turned them into the river-lane;
One after another he let them pass,
Then fastened the meadow-bars again.

Under the willows, and over the hill,
He patiently followed their sober pace;
The merry whistle for once was still,
And something shadowed the sunny face.

Only a boy! and his father had said
He never could let his youngest go:
Two already were lying dead
Under the feet of the trampling foe.

But after the evening work was done,
And the frogs were loud in the meadow-swamp,
Over his shoulder he slung his gun
And stealthily followed the foot-path damp.

Across the clover, and through the wheat,
With resolute heart and purpose grim,
Though cold was the dew on his hurrying feet
And the blind bat's flitting startled him.

Thrice since then had the lanes been white,
And the orchards sweet with apple-bloom;
And now, when the cows came back at night,
The feeble father drove them home.

For news had come to the lonely farm
That three were lying where two had lain;
And the old man's tremulous, palsied arm
Could never lean on a son's again.

The summer day grew cool and late.
He went for the cows when the work was done;
But down the lane, as he opened the gate,
He saw them coming one by one:

Brindle, Ebony, Speckle, and Bess,
Shaking their horns in the evening wind;
Cropping the buttercups out of the grass—
But who was it following close behind?

Loosely swung in the idle air
The empty sleeve of army blue;
And worn and pale, from the crisping hair,
Looked out a face that the father knew.

For Southern prisons will sometimes yawn,
And yield their dead unto life again;
And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn
In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang to their meeting eyes;
For the heart must speak when the lips are dumb:
And under the silent evening skies
Together they followed the cattle home.

CHARLES EDWARD CARRYL (1841—)

Robinson Crusoe's Story

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;

And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881)

The Marshes of Glynn

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noonday fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noonday sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the moon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream—

Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,—
Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark:—
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,

Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.
Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go.
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my Lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy;

The tide is at his highest height;
And it is night.
And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

Evening Song

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah! longer, longer, we!

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! Divorce our sun and sky apart,
Never our lips, our hands.

Song of the Chattahoochee

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attend the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All down the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried, *Abide, abide,*
The wilful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*

The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed, *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone,
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall,
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main.
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

AMBROSE BIERCE (1842-?)

Another Way

I lay in silence, dead. A woman came
And laid a rose upon my breast, and said,
"May God be merciful." She spoke my name,
And added, "It is strange to think him dead.

"He loved me well enough, but 'twas his way
To speak it lightly." Then, beneath her breath:
"Besides"—I knew what further she would say,

But then a footfall broke my dream of death.
To-day the words are mine. I lay the rose
Upon her breast, and speak her name, and deem
It strange indeed that she is dead. God knows
I had more pleasure in the other dream.

T. A. H.

Yes, he was that, or that, as you prefer,—
Did so and so, though, faith, it wasn't all;
Lived like a fool, or a philosopher,
And had whatever's needful to a fall.
As rough inflections on a planet merge
In the true bend of the gigantic sphere,
Nor mar the perfect circle of its verge,
So in the survey of his worth the small
Asperities of spirit disappear,
Lost in the grander curves of character.
He lately was hit hard; none knew but I
The strength and terror of that ghastly stroke,—
Not even herself. He uttered not a cry,
But set his teeth and made a revelry;
Drank like a devil,—staining sometimes red
The goblet's edge; diced with his conscience; spread,
Like Sisyphus, a feast for Death, and spoke
His welcome in a tongue so long forgot
That even his ancient guest remembered not
What race had cursed him in it. Thus my friend,
Still conjugating with each failing sense
The verb "to die" in every mood and tense,
Pursued his awful humor to the end.
When, like a stormy dawn, the crimson broke
From his white lips, he smiled and mutely bled,
And, having meanly lived, is grandly dead.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER (1844-1909)

The Celestial Passion

O white and midnight sky! O starry bath!
Wash me in thy pure, heavenly, crystal flood;
Cleanse me, ye stars, from earthly soil and scath;
Let not one taint remain in spirit or blood!
Receive my soul, ye burning, awful deeps;
Touch and baptize me with the mighty power
That in ye thrills, while the dark planet sleeps;
Make me all yours for one blest, secret hour!
O glittering host! O high angelic choir!
Silence each tone that with thy music jars;

Fill me even as an urn with thy white fire
Till all I am is kindred to the stars!
Make me thy child, thou infinite, holy night—
So shall my days be full of heavenly light!

The Song of a Heathen

(Sojourning in Galilee, A. D. 32)

If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY (1844-1890)

A White Rose

The red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love;
Oh, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

JAMES MAURICE THOMPSON (1844-1901)

Written on a Fly-Leaf of Theocritus

Those were good times, in olden days,
Of which the poet has his dreams,
When gods beset the woodland ways,
And lay in wait by all the streams.

One could be sure of something then
Severely simple, simply grand,
Or keenly, subtly sweet, as when
Venus and Love went hand in hand.

Now I would give (such is my need)
All the world's store of rhythm and rhyme
To see Pan fluting on a reed
And with his goat-hoof keeping time!

GEORGE THOMAS LANIGAN (1845-1886)

A Threnody

The Ahkoond of Swat is dead.—*London Papers.*

What, what, what,
What's the news from Swat?
Sad news,
Bad news,
Comes by the cable led
Through the Indian Ocean's bed,
Through the Persian Gulf, the Red
Sea and the Med-
Iterranean—he's dead;
The Ahkoond is dead!

For the Ahkoond I mourn,
Who wouldn't?
He strove to disregard the message stern,
But he Ahkoodn't.
Dead, dead, dead;
(Sorrow Swats!)
Swats wha hae wi' Ahkoond bled,
Swats whom he hath often led
Onward to a gory bed,
Or to victory,
As the case might be,
Sorrow Swats!
Tears shed,
Shed tears like water,
Your great Ahkoond is dead!
That Swats the matter!

Mourn, city of Swat!
Your great Ahkoond is not,
But lain 'mid worms to rot.
His mortal part alone, his soul was caught
(Because he was a good Ahkoond)
Up to the bosom of Mahound.
Though earthy walls his frame surround
(Forever hallowed be the ground!)
And sceptics mock the lowly mound
And say "He's now of no Ahkoond!"

His soul is in the skies,—
The azure skies that bend above his loved
Metropolis of Swat.
He sees with larger, other eyes,
Athwart all earthly mysteries—
He knows what's Swat.

Let Swat bury the great Ahkoond
With a noise of mourning and of lamentation!
Let Swat bury the great Ahkoond
With the noise of the mourning of the
Swattish nation!
Fallen is at length
Its tower of strength,
Its sun is dimmed ere it had nooned;
Dead lies the great Ahkoond,
The great Ahkoond of Swat
Is not!

JOHN BANISTER TABB (1845-1909)

Evolution

Out of the dusk a shadow,
Then, a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then, a lark;
Out of the heart a rapture,
Then, a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

The Sisters

The waves forever move;
The hills forever rest:
Yet each the heavens approve,
And Love alike hath blessed
A Martha's household care,
A Mary's cloistered prayer.

Anonymous

Anonymous—nor needs a name
To tell the secret whence the flame,
With light, and warmth, and incense, came
A new creation to proclaim.
So was it when, His labor done,
God saw His work, and smiled thereon:
His glory in the picture shone,
But name upon the canvas, none.

Departed

They cannot wholly pass away,
  How far soe'er above;
Nor we, the lingerers, wholly stay
  Apart from those we love:
For spirits in eternity,
  As shadows in the sun,
Reach backward into Time, as we,
  Like lifted clouds, reach on.

WILL CARLETON (1845-1912)

Out of the Old House, Nancy

Out of the old house, Nancy—moved up into the new;
All the hurry and worry is just as good as through.
Only a bounden duty remains for you and I—
And that's to stand on the doorstep here, and bid the old
  house good-by.

What a shell we've lived in, these nineteen or twenty years!
Wonder it hasn't smashed in, and tumbled about our ears;
Wonder it's stuck together, and answered till to-day;
But every individual log was put up here to stay.

Things looked rather new, though, when this old house was
  built;
And things that blossomed you would've made some woman
  wilt;
And every other day, then, as sure as day would break,
My neighbor Ager come this way invitin' me to "shake."

And you, for want of neighbors, was sometimes blue and sad,
For wolves and bears and wildcats was the nearest ones you
  had;
But, lookin' ahead to the clearin', we worked with all our
  might,
Until we was fairly out of the woods, and things was goin'
  right.

Look up there at our new house!—ain't it a thing to see?
Tall and big and handsome, and new as new can be;
All in apple-pie order, especially the shelves,
And never a debt to say but what we own it all ourselves.

Look at our old log-house—how little it now appears!
But it's never gone back on us for nineteen or twenty years;

An' I won't go back on it now, or go to pokin' fun—
There's such a thing as praisin' a thing for the good that it has done.

Probably you remember how rich we was that night,
When we was fairly settled, an' had things snug and tight:
We feel as proud as you please, Nancy, over our house that's new,
But we felt as proud under this old roof, and a good deal prouder, too.

Never a handsomer house was seen beneath the sun:
Kitchen and parlor and bedroom—we had 'em all in one;
And the fat old wooden clock that we bought when we come West,
Was tickin' away in the corner there, and doin' its level best.

Trees was all around us, a-whisperin' cheering words;
Loud was the squirrel's chatter, and sweet the songs of birds;
And home grew sweeter and brighter—our courage began to mount—
And things looked hearty and happy then, and work appeared to count.

And here one night it happened, when things was goin' bad,
We fell in a deep old quarrel—the first we ever had;
And when you give out and cried, then I, like a fool, give in,
And then we agreed to rub all out, and start the thing ag'in.

Here it was, you remember, we sat when the day was done,
And you was a-makin' clothing *that wasn't for either one;*
And often a soft word of love, I was soft enough to say,
And the wolves was howlin' in the woods not twenty rods away.

Then our first-born baby—a regular little joy,
Though I fretted a little because it wasn't a boy;
Wa'n't she a little flirt, though, with all her pouts and smiles?
Why, settlers come to see that show a half a dozen miles.

Yonder sat the cradle—a homely, home-made thing—
And many a night I rocked it, providin' you would sing;
And many a little squatter brought up with us to stay,—
And so that cradle, for many a year, was never put away.

How they kept a-comin' so cunnin' and fat and small!
How they growed! 'twas a wonder how we found room for 'em all;

But though the house was crowded, it empty seemed that day
When Jennie lay by the fireplace there, and moaned her life
away.

An' right in there the preacher, with Bible and hymn-book,
stood,
"'Twixt the dead and the living," and "hoped 'twould do us
good";
And the little whitewood coffin on the table there was set,
And now as I rub my eyes it seems as if I could see it yet.

Then that fit of sickness it brought on you, you know;
Just by a thread you hung, and you e'en-a'-most let go;
And here is the spot I tumbled, an' give the Lord his due,
When the doctor said the fever'd turned, an' he could fetch
you through.

Yes, a deal has happened to make this old house dear:
Christenin's, funerals, weddin's—what haven't we had here?
Not a log in this buildin' but its memories has got,
And not a nail in this old floor but touches a tender spot.

Out of the old house, Nancy,—moved up into the new;
All the hurry and worry is just as good as through;
But I tell you a thing right here, that I ain't ashamed to say,
There's precious things in this old house we never can take
away.

Here the old house will stand, but not as it stood before:
Winds will whistle through it, and rains will flood the floor;
And over the hearth, once blazing, the snowdrifts oft will
pile,
And the old thing will seem to be a-mournin' all the while.

Fare you well, old house! you're naught that can feel or see,
But you seem like a human being—a dear old friend to me;
And we never will have a better home, if *my* opinion stands,
Until we commence a-keepin' house in the house not made
with hands.

LLOYD MIFFLIN (1846-1921)

The Ship

I lay on Delos of the Cyclades
At evening, on a cape of golden land;
The blind Bard's book was open in my hand,
There where the Cyclops makes the Odyssey's
Calm pages tremble as Odysseus flees.
Then, stately, like a mirage o'er the sand,

A phantom ship across the sunset strand
Rose out of dreams and clave the purple seas;
Straight on that city's bastions did she run—
Whose toppling turrets on their donjons hold
Bells that to mortal ears have never tolled—
Then drifted down the gateways of the sun
With fading pennon and with gonfalon,
And cast her anchors in the pools of gold.

The Doors

As through the Void we went I heard his plumes
Strike on the darkness. It was passing sweet
To hold his hand and feel that thin air beat
Against our pinions as we winged those glooms
Of Ebon, through which Atropos still dooms
Each soul to pass. Then presently our feet
Found footing on a ledge of dark retreat,
And opposite appeared two doors of tombs
Seen by the star upon the angel's head
That made dim twilight; there I caught my breath:
"Why pause we here?" The angel answering said,
"The journey ends. These are the Doors of Death;
Lo, now they open, inward, for the dead."
And then a Voice,—"Who next that entereth?"

The Flight

Upon a cloud among the stars we stood.
The angel raised his hand and looked and said,
"Which world, of all yon starry myriad,
Shall we make wing to?" The still solitude
Became a harp whereon his voice and mood
Made spheral music round his haloed head.
I spake—for then I had not long been dead—
"Let me look round upon the vasts, and brood
A moment on these orbs ere I decide . . .
What is yon lower star that beauteous shines
And with soft splendor now incarnadines
Our wings?—*There* would I go and there abide."
He smiled as one who some child's thought divines:
"That is the world where yesternight you died."

EDGAR FAWCETT (1847-1904)

To an Oriole

How falls it, oriole, thou hast come to fly
In tropic splendor through the Northern sky?

At some glad moment was it nature's choice
To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?
Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black,
In some forgotten garden, ages back,
Yearning toward Heaven until its wish was heard,
Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE (1847-1908)

The Skeleton at the Feast

We summoned not the Silent Guest,
  And no man spake his name;
By lips unseen our Cup was pressed,
And mid the merry song and jest,
  The Uninvited came.

Wise were they in the days of old,
  Who gave the Stranger place;
And when the joyous catch was trolled,
And toasts were quaffed and tales were told,
  They looked him in the face.

God save us from the skeleton
  Who sitteth at the feast!
God rest the manly spirit gone,
Who sat beside the Silent One,
  And dreaded him the least!

The Net of Law

The net of law is spread so wide,
No sinner from its sweep may hide.

Its meshes are so fine and strong,
They take in every child of wrong.

O wondrous web of mystery!
Big fish alone escape from thee!

WALTER LEARNED (1847-1915)

To Critics

When I was seventeen I heard
  From each censorious tongue,
"I'd not do that if I were you;
  You see you're rather young."

Now that I number forty years,
I'm quite as often told
Of this or that I shouldn't do
Because I'm quite too old.

O carping world! If there's an age
Where youth and manhood keep
An equal poise, alas! I must
Have passed it in my sleep.

Growing Old

Sweet sixteen is shy and cold,
Calls me "sir," and thinks me old;
Hears in an embarrassed way
All the compliments I pay;

Finds my homage quite a bore,
Will not smile on me, and more
To her taste she finds the noise
And the chat of callow boys.

Not the lines around my eye,
Deepening as the years go by;
Not white hairs that strew my head,
Nor my less elastic tread;

Cares I find, nor joys I miss,
Make me feel my years like this:—
Sweet sixteen is shy and cold,
Calls me "sir," and thinks me old.

EDWARD KING (1848-1896)

A Woman's Execution

(Paris, 1871)

Sweet-breathed and young,
The people's daughter,
No nerves unstrung,
Going to slaughter!

"Good morning, friends,
You'll love us better,—
Make us amends:
We've burst your fetter!

"How the sun gleams!
(Women are snarling):
Give me your beams,
Liberty's darling!

"Marie's my name;
Christ's mother bore it.
That badge? No shame:
Glad that I wore it!"

(Hair to her waist,
Limbs like a Venus):
Robes are displaced:
"Soldiers, please screen us!

"He at the front?
That is my lover:
Stood all the brunt;—
Now—the fight's over.

"Powder and bread
Gave out together:
Droll! to be dead
In this bright weather!

"Jean, boy, we might
Have married in June!
This the wall? Right!
Vive la Commune!"

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848-1908)

De Big Bethel Church

De Big Bethel chu'ch! de Big Bethel chu'ch!
Done put ole Satun behin' um;
Ef a sinner git loose fum enny udder chu'ch,
De Big Bethel chu'ch will fin' um!
Hit's good ter be dere, en it's sweet ter be dere,
Wid de sisterin all aroun' you—
A-shakin' dem shackles er mussy en love
Wharwid de Lord is boun' you—

Hit's sweet ter be dere en lissen ter de hymes,
En hear dem mo'ners a-shoutin'—
Dey done reach de place whar der ain't no room
Fer enny mo' weepin' en doubtin'!

Hit's good ter be dere w'en de sinners all jine
Wid de brudderin in dere singin',
An' it look like Gaberl gwine ter rack up an' blow
En set dem heav'm bells ter ringin'!

Oh, de Big Bethel chu'ch! de Big Bethel chu'ch,
Done put ole Satun behin' um;
Ef a sinner git loose fum enny udder chu'ch,
De Big Bethel Chu'ch will fin' um!

WILL HENRY THOMPSON (1848—)

The High Tide at Gettysburg

A cloud possessed the hollow field,
The gathering battle's smoky shield;
Athwart the gloom the lightning flashed,
And through the cloud some horseman dashed,
And from the heights the thunder pealed.

Then at the brief command of Lee,
Moved out that matchless infantry,
With Pickett leading grandly down,
To rush against the roaring crown
Of those dread heights of destiny.

Far heard above the angry guns,
A cry across the tumult runs:
The voice that rang through Shiloh's woods,
And Chickamauga's soltitudes:
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

Ah, how the withering tempest blew
Against the front of Pettigrew!
A Khamsin wind that scorched and singed,
Like that infernal flame that fringed
The British squares at Waterloo!

A thousand fell where Kemper led;
A thousand died where Garnett bled;
In blinding flame and strangling smoke,
The remnant through the batteries broke,
And crossed the works with Armistead.

"Once more in Glory's van with me!"
Virginia cried to Tennessee:
"We two together, come what may,
Shall stand upon those works to-day!"
The reddest day in history.

Brave Tennessee! In reckless way
Virginia heard her comrade say:
"Close round this rent and riddled rag!"
What time she set her battle-flag
Amid the guns of Doubleday.

But who shall break the guards that wait
Before the awful face of Fate?
The tattered standards of the South
Were shrivelled at the cannon's mouth,
And all her hopes were desolate.

In vain the Tennesseean set
His breast against the bayonet;
In vain Virginia charged and raged,
A tigress in her wrath uncaged,
Till all the hill was red and wet!

Above the bayonets, mixed and crossed,
Men saw a gray, gigantic ghost
Receding through the battle-cloud,
And heard above the tempest loud
The death-cry of a nation lost!

The brave went down! Without disgrace
They leaped to ruin's red embrace;
They only heard Fame's thunders wake,
And saw the dazzling sun-burst break
In smiles on Glory's bloody face!

They fell, who lifted up a hand
And bade the sun in heaven to stand;
They smote and fell, who set the bars
Against the progress of the stars,
And stayed the march of Motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come
On through the fight's delirium;
They smote and stood, who held the hope
Of nations on that slippery slope,
Amid the cheers of Christendom!

God lives! He forged the iron will,
That clutched and held that trembling hill!
God lives and reigns! He built and lent
The heights for Freedom's battlement,
Where floats her flag in triumph still!

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
A mighty mother turns in tears,
The pages of her battle years,
Lamenting all her fallen sons!

JOHN VANCE CHENEY (1848-1922)

The Happiest Heart

Who drives the horses of the sun
Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed were done,
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the crown;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887)

Venus of the Louvre

Down the long hall she glistens like a star,
The foam-born mother of Love, transfixed to stone,
Yet none the less immortal, breathing on.
Time's brutal hand hath maimed but could not mar,
When first the enthralled enchantress from afar
Dazzled mine eyes, I saw not her alone,
Serenely poised on her world-worshipped throne,
As when she guided once her dove-drawn car,—
But at her feet a pale, death-stricken Jew,
Her life adorer, sobbed farewell to love.
Here *Heine* wept! Here still he weeps anew,
Nor ever shall his shadow lift or move,
While mourns one ardent heart, one poet-brain,
For vanished Hellas and Hebraic pain.

FRANCIS SALTUS SALTUS (1849-1889)

The Sphinx Speaks

Carved by a mighty race whose vanished hands
Formed empires more destructible than I,
In sultry silence I forever lie,
Wrapped in the shifting garment of the sands.
Below me, Pharaohs's scintillating bands
With clashings of loud cymbals have passed by,
And the eternal reverence of the sky
Falls royally on me and all my lands.
The record of the future broods in me;
I have with worlds of blazing stars been crowned,
But none my subtle mystery hath known
Save one, who made his way through blood and sea,
The Corsican, prophetic and renowned,
To whom I spake, one awful night alone!

EUGENE FIELD (1850-1895)

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of crystal light
Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we,"
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew;
The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,—
Never afeard are we!"
So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam,—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home:
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folk thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Little Boy Blue

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

The Lyttel Boy

Some time there ben a lyttel boy
That wolde not renne and play,
And helpless like that little tyke
Ben allwais in the way.
"Goe, make you merrie with the rest,"
His weary moder cried;
But with a frown he catcht her gown
And hong untill her side.

That boy did love his moder well,
Which spake him faire I ween;
He loved to stand and hold her hand
And ken her with his een;
His cosset bleated in the croft,
His toys unheeded lay,—
He wolde not goe, but, tarrying soe,
Ben allwais in the way.

Godde loveth children and doth gird
His throne with soche as these,
And he doth smile in plaisaunce while
They cluster at his knees;
And some time, when he looked on earth
And watched the bairns at play,
He kenned with joy a lyttel boy
Ben allwais in the way.

And then a moder felt her heart
How that it ben to-torne,
She kissed eche day til she ben gray
The shoon he use to worn;
No bairn let hold untill her gown
Nor played upon the floore,—
Godde's was the joy; a lyttel boy
Ben in the way no more!

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP (1851-1898)

Remembrance

Under the apple bough
Love, in a dream of leaves,
Dreamed we of love, as now,—
All that gives beauty or grieves.

Over the sad world then
Curved like the sky that bough;
I was in heaven then,—
You are in heaven now.

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852—)

The Man with the Hoe

[Written after seeing Millet's world-famous picture of a brutalized toiler. Copyright, 1922, by Edwin Markham. Used by permission.]

God made man in his own image
in the image of God made He him.
—Genesis.

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

Lincoln, the Man of the People

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.

Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal veil.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring at the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky.

Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.
Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

A Look into the Gulf

I looked one night, and there Semiramis,

With all her morning doves about her head,
Sat rocking on an ancient road of Hell,
Withered and eyeless, chanting to the moon
Snatches of song they sang to her of old
Upon the lighted roofs of Nineveh.
And then her voice rang out with rattling laugh:
"The bugles! they are crying back again—
Bugles that broke the nights of Babylon,
And then went crying on through Nineveh.

. . . . . .

Stand back, ye trembling messengers of ill!
Women, let go my hair: I am the Queen,
A whirlwind and a blaze of swords to quell
Insurgent cities. Let the iron tread
Of armies shake the earth. Look, lofty towers:
Assyria goes by upon the wind!"
And so she babbles by the ancient road,
While cities turned to dust upon the Earth
Rise through her whirling brain to live again—
Babbles all night, and when her voice is dead
Her weary lips beat on without a sound.

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN (1852-1924)

Maurice de Guérin

The old wine filled him, and he saw, with eyes
Anoint of Nature, fauns and dryads fair
Unseen by others; to him maidenhair
And waxen lilacs, and those birds that rise
A-sudden from tall reeds at slight surprise.
Brought charmëd thoughts; and in earth everywhere
He, like sad Jacques, found a music rare
As that of Syrinx to old Grecians wise.
A pagan heart, a Christian soul had he,
He followed Christ, yet for dead Pan he sighed,
Till earth and heaven met within his breast;
As if Theocritus in Sicily
Had come upon the Figure crucified
And lost his gods in deep, Christ-given rest.

HENRY VAN DYKE (1852—)

An Angler's Wish

I

When tulips bloom in Union Square,
And timid breaths of vernal air
  Go wandering down the dusty town,
Like children lost in Vanity Fair;

When every long, unlovely row
Of westward houses stands aglow,
  And leads the eyes towards sunset skies
Beyond the hills where green trees grow,—

Then weary seems the street parade,
And weary books, and weary trade:
  I'm only wishing to go a-fishing;
For this the month of May was made.

II

I guess the pussy-willows now
Are creeping out on every bough
  Along the brook; and robins look
For early worms behind the plough.

The thistle-birds have changed their dun
For yellow coats, to match the sun;
  And in the same array of flame
The dandelion show's begun.

The flocks of young anemones
Are dancing round the budding trees:
  Who can help wishing to go a-fishing
In days as full of joy as these?

III

I think the meadow-lark's clear sound
Leaks upward slowly from the ground,
  While on the wing the blue-birds ring
Their wedding-bells to woods around.

The flirting chewink calls his dear
Behind the bush; and very near,
  Where water flows, where green grass grows,
Song-sparrows gently sing, "Good cheer."

And, best of all, through twilight's calm
The hermit-thrush repeats his psalm.
  How much I'm wishing to go a-fishing
In days so sweet with music's balm!

IV

'Tis not a proud desire of mine;
I ask for nothing superfine;
  No heavy weight, no salmon great,
To break the record—or my line:

Only an idle little stream,
Whose amber waters softly gleam,
  Where I may wade, through woodland shade,
And cast the fly, and loaf, and dream:

Only a trout or two, to dart
From foaming pools, and try my art:
  No more I'm wishing—old-fashioned fishing,
And just a day on Nature's heart.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (1852-1916)

A Life-Lesson

There! little girl, don't cry!
  They have broken your doll, I know
    And your tea-set blue,
    And your play-house, too,
  Are things of the long ago;
    But childish troubles will soon pass by.—
      There! little girl don't cry!

There! little girl, don't cry!
  They have broken your slate, I know;
    And the glad, wild ways
    Of your school-girl days
  Are things of the long ago:
    But life and love will soon come by.—
      There! little girl don't cry!

There! little girl, don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But Heaven holds all for which you sigh.—
There! little girl, don't cry!

Bereaved

Let me come in where you sit weeping,—ay,
Let me, who have not any child to die,
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.

The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck; the hands you used
To kiss.—Such arms—such hands I never knew.
May I not weep with you?

Fain would I be of service—say some thing,
Between the tears, that would be comforting,—
But ah! so sadder than yourselves am I,
Who have no child to die.

A Parting Guest

What delightful hosts are they—
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight,
And all gratitude, I stay,
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good-night!"

[From the Biographical Edition of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the Publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.]

ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON (1853—)

The Wistful Days

What is there wanting in the Spring?
The air is soft as yesteryear;
The happy nested green is here,
And half the world is on the wing.
The morning beckons, and like balm
Are westward waters blue and calm.
Yet something's wanting in the Spring.

What is it wanting in the Spring?
O April, lover to us all,
What is so poignant in thy thrall
When children's merry voices ring?
What haunts us in the cooing dove
More subtle than the speech of Love?
What nameless lack or loss of Spring?

Let youth go dally with the Spring,
Call her the dear, the fair, the young;
And all her graces ever sung
Let him, once more rehearsing, sing.
They know, who keep a broken tryst,
Till something from the Spring be missed
We have not truly known the Spring.

IRWIN RUSSELL (1853-1879)

De Fust Banjo

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin'.
Keep silence fur yo' betters!—don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de possum's tail she's gwine to lecter—ladies, listen!—
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r is missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a' oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn—
Fur Noah tuk the "Herald," an' he read de ribber column—
An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-cl'arin' timber-patches,
An' 'lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat the steamah *Natchez*.

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an' a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut wuz gwine to happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob ebry sort o' beas'es—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!
He had a Morgan colt an' sebral head o' Jarsey cattle—
An' druv 'em 'board de Ark as soon's he heered de thunder rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain!—it come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drownded out—'cep' Noah an' de critters,
An' men he'd hired to work de boat—an' one to mix de bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' *an'* a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tell, whut wid all de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an' cussin'.

Now Ham, de only nigger whut wuz runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse he-se'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made—de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on; made bridge an' screws an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' tap'rin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it;
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De ha'r's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as wash-day-dinner graces;
An' sorted ob 'em by de size, f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz "Nebber min' de wedder,"—
She soun' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all togedder;
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin': Noah called de figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not de slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curi's, too, dat nigger's ways: his people nebber los' 'em—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de 'possum!

YOUNG EWING ALLISON (1853—)

The Dead Men's Song

Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
The mate was fixed by the bo'sun's pike
An' the bo'sun brained with a marlin-spike,
And the cookie's throat was marked belike
It had been clutched by fingers ten.
And there they lay, all good dead men,
Like break o' day in a boozin' ken—
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men of a whole ship's list,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Dead and bedamned and their souls gone whist,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
The skipper lay with his nob in gore
Where the scullion's axe his cheek had shore,
And the scullion he was stabbed times four;
And there they lay, and the soggy skies
Dripped ceaselessly in upstaring eyes,
By murk sunset and by foul sunrise—
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men of 'em stiff and stark,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Ten of the crew bore the murder mark,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
'Twas a cutlass swipe or an ounce of lead,
Or a gaping hole in a battered head,
  And the scuppers' glut of a rotting red.
And there they lay, ay, damn my eyes,
Their lookouts clapped on Paradise,
Their souls gone just the contrawise—
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men of 'em good and true,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Every man Jack could 'a' sailed with Old Pew,
  Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
There was chest on chest of Spanish gold
And a ton of plate in the middle hold,
And the cabin's riot of loot untold—
And there they lay that had took the plum,

With sightless eyes and with lips struck dumb,
And we shared all by rule o' thumb—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

More was seen through the stern light's screen,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Chartings undoubt where a woman had been,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
A flimsy shift on a bunker cot
With a dirk slit sheer through the bosom spot
And the lace stiff dry in a purplish rot—
Or was she wench or shuddering maid,
She dared the knife and she took the blade—
Faith, there was stuff for a plucky jade!
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
We wrapped 'em all in a mainsail tight,
With twice ten turns of a hawser's bight,
And we heaved 'em over and out of sight,
With a yo-heave-ho and a fare-ye-well,
And a sullen plunge in a sullen swell,
Ten fathoms along on the road to hell—
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

EDITH MATILDA THOMAS (1854—)

The Tears of the Poplars

Hath not the dark stream closed above thy head,
With envy of thy light, thou shining one?
Hast thou not, murmuring, made thy dreamless bed
Where blooms the asphodel, far from all sun?
But thou—thou dost obtain oblivious ease,
While here we rock and moan—thy funeral trees.

Have we not flung our tresses on the stream?
Hath not thy friend, the snowy cygnet, grieved,
And ofttimes watched for thy returning beam,
With archëd neck—and ofttimes been deceived?
A thousand years, and yet a thousand more,
Hast thou been mourned upon this reedy shore.

How long, how long since, all the summer day,
Earth heard the heavens sound from pole to pole,
While legion clouds stood forth in bright array;

Yet no rain followed on the thunder's roll!
Beneath that glittering legion shrank the seas,
And fire unseen was borne upon the breeze.

The ground was smouldering fire beneath our tread,
The forest dropped the leaf, and failed all grass.
The souls of stricken men their bodies fled,
And, sighing, flocked the wind.—We heard them pass!
The priest, that scanned the portent of the skies,
Fell reeling back, with pierced and shrivelled eyes.

But ah, he saw not what our sight discerned—
The flying chariot-wheel, with fervid tire—
The steeds that unaccustomed guidance spurned
With fateful hoof and breath that scattered fire—
He saw not thee and thine unmeasured fall,
And Jove, unheeding, in his cloudy hall!

Dragged headlong by those swift immortal horse,
Up to our sire went thy vain cry for aid;
Neither he cast a bound, to check their course,
Nor on the golden rein a hand he laid.
Brother beloved, what foe could so deceive,
Bidding thee dare what scarcely gods achieve?

Alas! that we remember—and forget!
For, if we sometimes gain a brief repose,
Soon are we roused, by sudden fear beset;
Then, through our silver boughs a shudder goes,
Our heads we lift, we search the azure gloom,
As though thou still wert falling to thy doom!

Upon the earth no loves were ever ours;
Man greets us from afar, but comes not near,
Nor even round our dark unwindowed towers
Throng the light birds—so much our grief they fear!
We sigh—we tremble—'tis not to the breeze—
Brother beloved, we are thy funeral trees!

Evoe!

"Many are the wand-bearers, few are the true bacchanals."

I

Many are the wand-bearers;
Their windy shouts I hear,
Along the hillside vineyard,
And where the wine runs clear;

They show the vine-leaf chaplet,
The ivy-wreathen spear.
But the god, the true Iacchus,
He does not hold them dear.

II

Many are the wand-bearers,
And bravely are they clad;
Yes, they have all the tokens
His early lovers had.
They sing the master passions,
Themselves unsad, unglad;
And the god, the true Iacchus—
He knows they are not mad!

III

Many are the wand-bearers;
The fawn-skin bright they wear;
There are among them mænads,
That rave with unbound hair.
They toss the harmless firebrand—
It spends itself in air:
And the god, the true Iacchus,
He smiles—and does not care.

IV

Many are the wand-bearers.
And who (ye ask) am I?
One who was born in madness,
"Evoe!" my first cry—
Who dares, before your spear-points,
To challenge and defy;
And the god, the true Iacchus,
So keep me till I die!

V

Many are the wand-bearers.
I bear with me no sign;
Yet, I was mad, was drunken,
Ere yet I tasted wine;
Nor bleeding grape can slacken
The thirst wherewith I pine;
And the god, the true Iacchus
Hears now this song of mine.

The Quiet Pilgrim

(Isaiah XXXIII, 15)

When on my soul in nakedness
His swift, avertless hand did press,
Then I stood still, nor cried aloud,
Nor murmured low in ashes bowed;
And, since my woe is utterless,
To supreme quiet I am vowed;
Afar from me be moan and tears,—
I shall go softly all my years.

Whenso my quick, light-sandaled feet
Bring me where Joys and Pleasures meet,
I mingle with their throng at will;
They know me not an alien still,
Since neither words nor ways unsweet
Of storëd bitterness I spill;
Youth shuns me not, nor gladness fears,—
For I go softly all my years.

Whenso I come where Griefs convene,
And in my ear their voice is keen,
They know me not, as on I glide,
That with Arch Sorrow I abide.
They haggard are, and drooped of mien,
And round their brows have cypress tied:
Such shows I leave to light Grief's peers,—
I shall go softly all my years.

Yea, softly! heart of hearts unknown.
Silence hath speech that passeth moan,
More piercing-keen than breathëd cries
To such as heed, made sorrow-wise.
But save this voice without a tone,
That runs before me to the skies,
And rings above thy ringing spheres,
Lord, I go softly all my years!

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY (1855—)

At Gibraltar

I

England, I stand on thy imperial ground,
Not all a stranger; as thy bugles blow,
I feel within my blood old battles flow,—

The blood whose ancient founts in thee are found.
Still surging dark against the Christian bound
Wide Islam presses; well its peoples know
Thy heights that watch them wandering below;
I think how Lucknow heard their gathering sound.
I turn, and meet the cruel, turbaned face.
England, 'tis sweet to be so much thy son!
I feel the conqueror in my blood and race;
Last night Trafalgar awed me, and to-day
Gibraltar wakened; hark, thy evening gun
Startles the desert over Africa!

II

Thou art the rock of empire, set mid-seas
Between the East and West, that God has built;
Advance thy Roman borders where thou wilt,
While run thy armies true with his decrees;
Law, justice, liberty,—great gifts are these:
Watch that they spread where English blood is spilt,
Lest, mixed and sullied with his country's guilt,
The soldier's life-stream flow, and Heaven displease!
Two swords there are: one naked, apt to smite,
Thy blade of war; and, battle-storied, one
Rejoices in the sheath, and hides from light.
American I am; would wars were done!
Now westward, look, my country bids good-night,—
Peace to the world from ports without a gun!

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX (1855-1919)

Solitude

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
  Weep, and you weep alone;
For this brave old earth must borrow its mirth,
  It has trouble enough of its own.
Sing, and the hills will answer;
  Sigh! it is lost on the air;
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,
  But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;
  Grieve, and they turn and go:
They want full measure of all your pleasure,
  But they do not want your woe.
Be glad, and your friends are many;
  Be sad, and you lose them all,—
There are none to decline your nectared wine,
  But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;
Fast, and the world goes by.
Succeed and give, and it helps you live,
But no man can help you die.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a long and lordly train:
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER (1855-1896)

Behold the Deeds!

(Being the plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a "failure to connect" on a Saturday night.)

I would that all men my case would know,
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I of my landlady am lockèd in
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay:
She turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon-stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I, when the morrow doth begin
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
Piano-ward. This day, for all my moans,
Dry-bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer" *adagio*—
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the "bunko skin"
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we

Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday's shortness of trade dollars three?
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Yea! She forgets that arm that was wont to go
Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of her young man's elbow.
I forget not, for I that youth have been!
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm as I was he;
But his noise brought no pleasurance, verily.
Small ease he got of playing on the bones
Or hammering on the stove-pipe, that I see.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kind!
Thee I will show up—yea, up I will show
Thy too-thick buckwheats and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray:
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house," I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.
Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

ENVOY

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
Privily by the window. Hence these groans.
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit*.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

A Pitcher of Mignonette

A pitcher of mignonette
In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
In a tenement's highest casement.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE (1856—)

Tears

When I consider life and its few years—
A wisp of fog between us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Immortality

Battles nor songs can from oblivion save,
  But Fame upon a white deed loves to build:
From out that cup of water Sidney gave,
  Not one drop has been spilled.

Telling the Bees

Bathsheba came out to the sun,
Out to our wallëd cherry-trees;
The tears adown her cheek did run,
Bathsheba standing in the sun,
Telling the bees.

My mother had that moment died;
Unknowing, sped I to the trees,
And plucked Bathsheba's hand aside;
Then caught the name that there she cried
Telling the bees.

Her look I never can forget,
I that held sobbing to her knees;
The cherry-boughs above us met;
I think I see Bathsheba yet
Telling the bees.

HARRY THURSTON PECK (1856-1914)

Heliotrope

Amid the chapel's chequered gloom
She laughed with Dora and Flora,
And chattered in the lecture-room,—
That saucy little sophomora!
Yet while, as in her other schools,
She was a privileged transgressor,
She never broke the simple rules
Of one particular professor.

But when he spoke of varied lore,
Paroxytones and modes potential,
She listened with a face that wore
A look half fond, half reverential.
To her that earnest voice was sweet,
And though her love had no confessor,
Her girlish heart lay at the feet
Of that particular professor.

And he had learned, among his books
That held the lore of ages olden,
To watch those ever changing looks,
The wistful eyes, the tresses golden,
That stirred his pulse with passion's pain
And thrilled his soul with soft desire,
And bade fond youth return again
Crowned with his coronet of fire.

Her sunny smile, her winsome ways,
Were more to him than all his knowledge,
And she preferred his words of praise
To all the honors of the college.
Yet "What am foolish I to him?"
She whispered to her heart's confessor.
"She thinks me old and gray and grim,"
In silence pondered the professor.

Yet once when Christmas bells were rung
Above ten thousand solemn churches,
And swelling anthems grandly sung
Pealed through the dim cathedral arches,—
Ere home returning, filled with hope,
Softly she stole by gate and gable,
And a sweet spray of heliotrope
Left on his littered study-table.

Nor came she more from day to day
Like sunshine through the shadows rifting:
Above her grave, far, far away,
The ever silent snows were drifting;
And those who mourned her winsome face
Found in its stead a swift successor
And loved another in her place—
All, save the silent old professor.

But, in the tender twilight gray,
Shut from the sight of carping critic,
His lonely thoughts would often stray
From Vedic verse and tongues Semitic,
Bidding the ghost of vanished hope
Mock with its past the sad possessor
Of the dead spray of heliotrope
That once she gave the old professor.

ALICE BROWN (1857—)

Cloistered

Seal thou the window! Yea, shut out the light
And bar my door to all the airs of spring.
Yet in my cell, concealed from curious sight,
Here will I sit and sing.

Deaf, blind, and wilt Thou have me dumb, also,
Telling in silence these sad beads of days?
So let it be: though no sweet numbers flow,
My breath shall be Thy praise.

Yea, though Thou slay the life wherein men see
The upward-mounting flame, the failing spark,
My heart of love, that heart Thou gavest me,
Shall beat on in the dark.

The West-Country Lover

Then, lady, at last thou art sick of my sighing?
Good-bye!
So long as I sue, thou wilt still be denying?
Good-bye!
Ah, well! shall I vow then to serve thee forever,
And swear no unkindness our kinship can sever?
Nay, nay, dear my lass! here's an end of endeavor.
Good-bye!

Yet let no sweet ruth for my misery grieve thee.
Good-bye!
The man who has loved knows as well how to leave thee.
Good-bye!
The gorse is enkindled, there's bloom on the heather,
And love is my joy, and so too is fair weather;
I still ride abroad, though we ride not together.
Good-bye!

My horse is my mate; let the wind be my master.
Good-bye!
Though Care may pursue, yet my hound follows faster.
Good-bye!
The red deer's a-tremble in coverts unbroken.
He hears the hoof-thunder; he scents the death-token.
Shall I mope at home, under vows never spoken?
Good-bye!

The brown earth's my book, and I ride forth to read it.
Good-bye!
The stream runneth fast, but my will shall outspeed it.
Good-bye!
I loved thee, dear lass, but I hate the hag Sorrow,
As sun follows rain, and to-night has its morrow,
So I'll taste of joy, though I steal, beg, or borrow!
Good-bye!

BEN KING (1857-1894)

If I Should Die Tonight

If I should die tonight
And you should come to my cold corpse and say,
Weeping and heartsick o'er my lifeless clay—
If I should die tonight
And you should come in deepest grief and woe
And say, "Here's that ten dollars that I owe"—
I might arise in my large white cravat
And say, "What's that?"
If I should die tonight
And you should come to my cold corpse and kneel,
Clasping my bier to show the grief you feel—
I say, if I should die tonight
And you should come to me, and there and then
Just even hint 'bout payin' me that ten,
I might arise the while:
But I'd drop dead again.

WILLIAM LINDSEY (1858-1922)

En Garde, Messieurs

En garde, Messieurs, too long have I endured,
Too long with patience borne the world's rebuff;
Now he who shoulders me shall find me rough;
The weakness of an easy soul is cured.

I've shouted, leathern-lunged, when fame or gold
Were won by others, turned to aid my friend;—
Dull-pated ever,—but such follies end;
Only a fool's content, and in the cold.

My doublet is in tatters, and my purse
Waves in the wind, light as my lady's fan;
Only my sword is bright; with it I plan
To win success, or put my sword to nurse.

I wait no longer for the primal blow;
Henceforth my stroke is first, I give offense;
I claim no more an over-dainty sense,
I brook no blocking where I plan to go.

En garde, Messieurs! and if my hand is hard,
Remember I've been buffeted at will;
I am a whit impatient, and 'tis ill
To cross a hungry dog, Messieurs, en garde.

HORACE L. TRAUBEL (1858-1919)

I Servèd in a Great Cause

I served in a great cause:
Long had I doubted the call I heard, wantoning the seasons dead;
The opportune days were deserts, the sunlight fell on a waste,
But the dawn brought me face to face with itself, with the opening flowers:
I looked upon my sea casting its wrecks down the shore in the storm,
The wrecks, my useless volitions, disordered, missent, ill-protected, to the deep,
The resurrected programme of self veined red with the blood of my birth,

The futile hours past, the distrusted images recalled,
In tumult of desire, in quietude of achievement, in effacement of unbelief.

I served the great cause, the great cause served me;
There were never any debts between us, the compact was without obligation;
I answered its cry, it answered my cry;
The seed in the ground hungered for light, the light pierced the earth with unerring love—
We met, we ran together, appointed mates.

I served not as one who follows or one who leads;
I served not in abasement, on my knees, with my head in the dust;
I served proudly, accepted, accepting,
The cloudland phantoms never misting the prospect,
The sunshine sirens never dazing the day with their splendor,
Ever in my heart crowding ancient and unborn dreams,
Cresting the hills and making the valleys fertile.

I served in a great cause:
I served without heroism, without virtue, with no promises of success, with no near destination of treasure;
I was on the march, I contained that which persevered me to ends unseen, no footsore night relaxed my pace;
There was only the press of invisible hands, only gray-brown eyes of invitation,
Only my franchised heart to fuel the fires to suns.

HELEN GRAY CONE (1859—)

A Chant of Love for England

A song of hate is a song of Hell;
Some there be that sing it well.
Let them sing it loud and long,
We lift our hearts in a loftier song:
We lift our hearts to heaven above,
Singing the glory of her we love,—
England!

Glory of thought and glory of deed,
Glory of Hampden and Runnymede;
Glory of ships that sought far goals,
Glory of swords and glory of souls!
Glory of songs, mounting as birds,
Glory immortal of magical words;
Glory of Milton, glory of Nelson,

Tragical glory of Gordon and Scott;
Glory of Shelley, glory of Sidney,
Glory transcendant that perishes not,—
Her's is the story, her's the glory,
England!

Shatter her beauteous breast ye may,
The spirit of England none can slay!
Dash the bomb on the dome of St. Paul's;
Deem ye the name of the Admiral falls?
Pry ye the stone from the chancel floor,—
Dream ye that Shakespeare lives no more?
Where is the giant shot that kills
Wordsworth walking the old green hills?
Trample the red rose on the ground,—
Keats is Beauty while earth spins round!
Bind her, grind her, burn her with fire,
Cast her ashes into the sea,—
She shall escape, she shall aspire,
She shall arise to make men free:
She shall arise in a sacred scorn,
Lighting the lives that are yet unborn;
Spirit supernal, Splendour eternal,
England!

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN (1860-1916)

To a Rose

Go, Rose, and in her golden hair
  You shall forget the garden soon;
The sunshine is a captive there
  And crowns her with a constant noon.
And when your spicy odor goes,
  And fades the beauty of your bloom,
Think what a lovely hand, O Rose,
  Shall place your body in the tomb!

CLINTON SCOLLARD (1860—)

As I Came Down from Lebanon

As I came down from Lebanon,
Came winding, wandering slowly down
Through mountain passes bleak and brown,
The cloudless day was well-nigh done.
The city, like an opal set

In emerald, showed each minaret
Afire with radiant beams of sun,
And glistened, orange, fig, and lime,
Where song-birds made melodious chime,
As I came down from Lebanon.

As I came down from Lebanon,
Like lava in the dying glow,
Through olive orchards far below
I saw the murmuring river run;
And 'neath the wall upon the sand
Swart sheiks from distant Samarcand,
With precious spices they had won,
Lay long and languidly in wait
Till they might pass the guarded gate,
As I came down from Lebanon.

As I came down from Lebanon,
I saw strange men from lands afar,
In mosque and square and gay bazaar,
The Magi that the Moslem shun,
And Grave Effendi from Stamboul,
Who sherbet sipped in corners cool;
And, from the balconies o'errun
With roses, gleamed the eyes of those
Who dwell in still seraglios,
As I came down from Lebanon.

As I came down from Lebanon,
The flaming flower of daytime died,
And Night, arrayed as is a bride
Of some great king, in garments spun
Of purple and the finest gold,
Outbloomed in glories manifold,
Until the moon, above the dun
And darkening desert, void of shade,
Shone like a keen Damascus blade,
As I came down from Lebanon.

RICHARD BURTON (1861—)

The City of the Dead

They do neither plight nor wed
In the city of the dead,
In the city where they sleep away the hours;
But they lie, while o'er them range
Winter blight and Summer change,
And a hundred happy whisperings of flowers;

No, they neither wed nor plight,
And the day is like the night,
For their vision is of other kind than ours.

They do neither sing nor sigh
In that burg of by and by,
Where the streets have grasses growing cool and long;
But they rest within their bed,
Leaving all their thoughts unsaid,
Deeming silence better far than sob or song.
No, they neither sigh nor sing,
Though the robin be a-wing,
Though the leaves of Autumn march a million strong.

There is only rest and peace
In the City of Surcease
From the failings and the wailings 'neath the sun,
And the wings of the swift years
Beat but gently o'er their biers,
Making music to the sleepers every one.
There is only peace and rest;
But to them it seemeth best,
For they lie at peace and know that life is done.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY (1861-1920)

Tryste Noël

The Ox he openeth wide the Doore,
  And from the Snowe he calls her inne,
And he hath seen her smile therefore,
  Our Ladye without Sinne.
    Now soone from Sleep
    A Starre shall leap,
And soone arrive both King and Hinde:
                Amen, Amen,
But, the place co'd I but finde!

The Ox hath hushed his voyce and bent
  Trewe eyes of Pity ore the Mow,
And on his lovelie Neck, forspent,
  The Blessed lays her Browe.
    Around her feet
    Full Warme and Sweete
His bowerie Breath doth meeklie dwell:
                Amen, Amen,
But sore am I with Vaine Travèl!

The Ox is host in Judah stall
  And Host of more than onelie one,
For close she gathereth withal

Our Lorde her littel Sonne.
Glad Hinde and King
Their Gyfte may bring,
But wo'd tonight my Teares were There,
Amen, Amen:
Between her Bosom and her hayre!

Of Joan's Youth

I would unto my fair restore
A simple thing:
The flushing cheek she had before!
Out-velveting
No more, no more,
On our sad shore,
The carmine grape, the moth's auroral wing.

Ah, say how winds in flooding grass
Unmoor the rose;
Or guileful ways the salmon pass
To sea, disclose;
For so, alas,
With Love, alas,
With fatal, fatal Love a girlhood goes.

ROBERT CAMERON ROGERS (1862-1912)

The Rosary

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over, every one apart,
My rosary.
Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,
To still a heart in absence wrung;
I tell each bead unto the end and there
A cross is hung.
Oh memories that bless—and burn!
Oh barren gain—and bitter loss!
I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross,
Sweetheart,
To kiss the cross.

HENRY HOLCOMB BENNETT (1863—)

The Flag Goes By

Hats off!
Along the street there comes

A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of color beneath the sky:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines,
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off!
The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State:
Weary marches and sinking ships;
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right and law,
Stately honor and reverend awe;

Sign of a nation, great and strong
To ward her people from foreign wrong:
Pride and glory and honor,—all
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;
And loyal hearts are beating high:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

OLIVER HERFORD (1863—)

Child's Natural History

Geese

Ev-er-y child who has the use
Of his sen-ses knows a goose.
Sees them un-der-neath the tree
Gath-er round the goose-girl's knee,
While she reads them by the hour
From the works of Scho-pen-hau-er.
How pa-tient-ly the geese at-tend!
But do they re-al-ly com-pre-hend
What Scho-pen-hau-er's driv-ing at?

Oh, not at all; but what of that?
Nei-ther do I; nei-ther does she;
And, for that mat-ter, nor does he.

The Mon-Goos

This, children, is the famed Mon-goos.
He has an ap-pe-tite ab-struse:
Strange to re-late, this crea-ture takes
A cu-ri-ous joy in eat-ing snakes—
All kinds—though, it must be con-fessed
He likes the poi-son-ous ones the best.
From him we learn how ve-ry small
A thing can bring a-bout a Fall.
O Mon-goos, where were you that day,
When Mistress Eve was led a-stray?
If you'd but seen the ser-pent first,
Our parents would not have been cursed,
And so there would be no ex-cuse
For Milton, but for you—Mon-goos!

GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863—)

"As in the Midst of Battle"

As in the midst of battle there is room
  For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth;
  As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom;
As in the crevices of Cæsar's tomb
  The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth:
  So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom.
For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
  Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
  Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth;
Till from that Summer's trance we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind.

"What Riches Have You?"

What riches have you that you deem me poor,
Or what large comfort that you call me sad?
Tell me what makes you so exceeding glad:
Is your earth happy or your heaven sure?
I hope for heaven, since the stars endure

And bring such tidings as our fathers had.
I know no deeper doubt to make me mad,
I need no brighter love to keep me pure.
To me the faiths of old are daily bread;
I bless their hope, I bless their will to save,
And my deep heart still meaneth what they said.
It makes me happy that the soul is brave,
And, being so much kinsman to the dead,
I walk contented to the peopled grave.

ROBERT LOVEMAN (1864-1923)

April Rain

It is not raining rain for me,
  It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
  Wild flowers on the hills.

The clouds of gray engulf the day
  And overwhelm the town;
It is not raining rain to me,
  It's raining roses down.

It is not raining rain to me,
  But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
  Can find a bed and room.

A health unto the happy,
  A fig for him who frets!
It is not raining rain to me,
  It's raining violets.

RICHARD HOVEY (1864-1900) AND BLISS CARMAN (1861—)

The Wander-Lovers

Down the world with Marna!
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind,
Vagabond and unconfined!
Roving with the roving rain
Its unboundaried domain!
Kith and kin of wander-kind,
Children of the sea!

Petrels of the sea-drift!
Swallows of the lea!
Arabs of the whole wide girth
Of the wind-encircled earth!
In all climes we pitch our tents,
Cronies of the elements,
With the secret lords of birth
Intimate and free.

All the seaboard knows us
From Fundy to the Keys;
Every bend and every creek
Of abundant Chesapeake;
Ardise hills and Newport coves
And the far-off orange groves,
Where Floridian oceans break,
Tropic tiger seas.

Down the world with Marna,
Tarrying there and here!
Just as much at home in Spain
As in Tangier or Touraine!
Shakespeare's Avon knows us well,
And the crags of Neufchâtel;
And the ancient Nile is fain
Of our coming near.

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the air!
Marna of the subtle grace,
And the vision in her face!
Moving in the measures trod
By the angels before God!
With her sky-blue eyes amaze
And her sea-blue hair!

Marna with the trees' life
In her veins a-stir!
Marna of the aspen heart
Where the sudden quivers start!
Quick-responsive, subtle child,
Artless as an artless child,
Spite of all her reach of art!
Oh, to roam with her!

Marna with the wind's will,
Daughter of the sea!
Marna of the quick disdain,
Starting at the dream of stain!
At a smile with love aglow,

At a frown a statued woe,
Standing pinnacled in pain
Till a kiss sets free!

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the fire!
Marna of the deathless hope,
Still alert to win new scope
Where the wings of life may spread
For a flight unhazarded!
Dreaming of the speech to cope
With the heart's desire!

Marna of the far quest
After the divine!
Striving ever for some goal
Past the blunder-god's control!
Dreaming of potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears!
That's the Marna of my soul,
Wander-bride of mine!

Envoy

From "More Songs from Vagabondia"

Whose furthest footstep never strayed
Beyond the village of his birth
Is but a lodger for the night
In this old wayside inn of earth.

To-morrow he shall take his pack,
And set out for the ways beyond
On the old trail from star to star,
An alien and a vagabond.

The Sea Gipsy

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be

Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the Sea.

Love in the Winds

When I am standing on a mountain crest,
Or hold the tiller in the dashing spray,
My love of you leaps foaming in my breast,
Shouts with the winds and sweeps to their foray;
My heart bounds with the horses of the sea,
And plunges in the wild ride of the night,
Flaunts in the teeth of tempest the large glee
That rides out Fate and welcomes gods to fight.
Ho, love, I laugh aloud for love of you,
Glad that our love is fellow to rough weather,—
No fretful orchid hothoused from the dew,
But hale and hardy as the highland heather,
Rejoicing in the wind that stings and thrills,
Comrade of ocean, playmate of the hills.

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS (1865—)

The Recruit

Sez Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"Bedad, yer a bad 'un!
Now turn out yer toes!
Yer belt is unhookit,
Yer cap is on crookit,
Ye may not be dhrunk,
But, be jabbers, ye look it!
Wan—two!—
Wan—two!—
Ye monkey-faced divil, I'll jolly ye through!
Wan—two!—
Time! Mark!
Ye march like the aigle in Cintheral Parrk!"

Sez Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"A saint it ud sadden
To dhrill such a mug!
Eyes front!—ye baboon, ye!—
Chin up!—ye gossoon, ye!
Ye've jaws like a goat—
Halt! ye leather-lipped loon, ye!
Wan—two!
Wan—two!

Ye whiskered orang-outang, I'll fix you!
Wan—two!—
Time! Mark!
Ye've eyes like a bat!—can ye see in the dark?"

Sez Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"Yer figger wants padd'n—
Sure, man, ye've no shape!
Behind ye yer shoulders
Stick out like two bowlders;
Yer shins is as thin
As a pair of pen-holders!
Wan—two!
Wan—two!
Yer belly belongs on yer back, ye Jew!
Wan—two!—
Time! Mark!
I'm dhry as a dog—I can't shpake but I bark!"

Sez Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"Me heart it ud gladden
To blacken yer eye.
Ye're gettin' too bold, ye
Compel me to scold ye,—
'Tis halt! that I say,—
Will ye heed what I told ye?
Wan—two!
Wan—two!
Be jabers, I'm dhryer than Brian Boru!
Wan—two!—
Time! Mark!
What's wur-ruk for chickens is sport for the lark!"

Sez Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"I'll not stay a gadd'n
Wid dagoes like you!
I'll travel no farther,
I'm dyin' for—wather;—
Come on, if ye like,—
Can ye loan me a quather?
Ya-as, you,
What,—two?
And ye'll pay the potheen? Ye're a daisy! Whurroo!
You'll do!
Whist! Mark!
The Rigiment's flatthered to own ye, me spark!"

MADISON CAWEIN (1865-1914)

The Rain-Crow

Can freckled August,—drowsing warm and blonde
Beside a wheat-shock in the white-topped mead,
In her hot hair the oxeyed daisies wound,—
O bird of rain, lend aught but sleepy heed
To Thee? when no plumed weed, no feather'd seed
Blows by her; and no ripple breaks the pond,
That gleams like flint between its rim of grasses,
Through which the dragonfly forever passes
Like splintered diamond.

Drouth weights the trees, and from the farmhouse eaves
The locust, pulse-beat of the summer day,
Throbs; and the lane, that shambles under leaves
Limp with the heat—a league of rutty way—
Is lost in dust; and sultry scents of hay
Breathe from the panting meadows heaped with sheaves.
Now, now, O bird, what hint is there of rain,
In thirsty heaven or on burning plain,
That thy keen eye perceives?

But thou art right. Thou prophesiest true.
For hardly hast thou ceased thy forecasting,
When, up the western fierceness of scorched blue,
Great water-carrier winds their buckets bring
Brimming with freshness. How their dippers ring
And flash and rumble! lavishing dark dew
On corn and forestland, that, streaming wet,
Their hilly backs against the downpour set,
Like giants vague in view.

The butterfly, safe under leaf and flower,
Has found a roof, knowing how true thou art;
The bumble-bee, within the last half-hour,
Has ceased to hug the honey to its heart;
While in the barnyard, under shed and cart,
Brood-hens have housed.—But I, who scorned thy power,
Barometer of the birds,—like August there,—
Beneath a beech, dripping from foot to hair,
Like some drenched truant, cower.

Here Is the Place Where Loveliness Keeps House

Here is the place where Loveliness keeps house,
Between the river and the wooded hills,
Within a valley where the Springtime spills

Her firstling wind-flowers under blossoming boughs:
Where Summer sits braiding her warm, white brows
With bramble-roses; and where Autumn fills
Her lap with asters; and old Winter frills
With crimson haw and hip his snowy blouse.
Here you may meet with Beauty. Here she sits
Gazing upon the moon, or all the day
Tuning a wood-thrush flute, remote, unseen:
Or when the storm is out, 'tis she who flits
From rock to rock, a form of flying spray,
Shouting, beneath the leaves' tumultuous green.

ANNE REEVE ALDRICH (1866-1892)

Recollection

How can it be that I forget
  The way he phrased my doom,
When I recall the arabesques
  That carpeted the room?

How can it be that I forget
  His look and mien that hour,
When I recall I wore a rose,
  And still can smell the flower?

How can it be that I forget
  Those words that were the last,
When I recall the tune a man
  Was whistling as he passed?

These things are what we keep from life's
  Supremest joy or pain;
For Memory locks her chaff in bins
  And throws away the grain.

A Little Parable

I made the cross myself whose weight
  Was later laid on me.
This thought is torture as I toil
  Up life's steep Calvary.

To think mine own hands drove the nails!
  I sang a merry song,
And chose the heaviest wood I had
  To build it firm and strong.

If I had guessed—if I had dreamed
  Its weight was meant for me,
I should have made a lighter cross
  To bear up Calvary!

GELETT BURGESS (1866—)

The Purple Cow

Reflections on a Mythic Beast,
Who's Quite Remarkable, at Least.

I never saw a Purple Cow;
  I never Hope to See One;
But I can Tell you, Anyhow,
  I'd rather See than Be One.

DORA READ GOODALE (1866—)

The Judgment

Thou hast done evil
And given place to the devil;
Yet so cunningly thou concealest
The thing which thou feelest,
That no eye espieth it,
Satan himself denieth it.
Go where it chooseth thee,
There is none that accuseth thee;
Neither foe nor lover
Will the wrong uncover;
The world's breath raiseth thee,
And thy own past praiseth thee.
Yet know thou this:
At quick of thy being
Is an eye all-seeing,
The snake's wit evadeth not,
The charmed lip persuadeth not;
So thoroughly it despiseth
The thing thy hand prizeth,
Though the sun were thy clothing,
It should count thee for nothing.
Thine own eye divineth thee,
Thine own soul arraigneth thee;
God himself cannot shrive thee
Till that judge forgive thee.

ARTHUR COLTON (1868—)

To Faustine

Sometime, it may be, you and I
In some deserted yard will lie
Where Memory fades away;
Caring no more for Love his dreams,
Busy with new and alien themes,
The saints and sages say.

But let our graves be side by side,
So idlers may at evening tide
Pause there a moment's space:
"Ah, they were lovers who lie here;
Else why these low graves laid so near,
In this forgotten place?"

EDGAR LEE MASTERS (1868—)

From "The New Spoon River"

Morgan Oakley

There is a time for vine leaves in the hair,
And a time for thorns on the brow,
Even as life is both ecstasy and agony,
And as Nature grows both leaves and thorns.
In youth I knew love and victory;
In age loneliness and pain.
But life is to be lived neither as leaves,
Nor as thorns, but through both.
I came to the wisdom of barren boughs,
And the desolation of unleaved thorns,
Which remembered the leaves!

Bertrand Hume

To recall and revision blue skies;
To imagine the summer's clouds;
To remember mountains and wooded slopes,
And the blue of October water;
To face the shark gray spray of the sea;
To listen in dreams to voices singing,
Voices departed, but never forgotten;
To feel the kisses of vanished lips,
And see the eyes of rapture,
And hear the whispers of sacred midnights. . . .

To live over the richness of life,
Never fully lived;
To see it all, as from a window that looks
Upon a garden of flowers and distant hills,
From which your broken body is barred. . . .
O life! O unutterable beauty,
To leave you, knowing that you were never loved enough,
Wishing to live you all over
With all the soul's wise will!

Howard Lamson

Ice cannot shiver in the cold,
Nor stones shrink from the lapping flame.
Eyes that are sealed, no more have tears;
Ears that are stopped hear nothing ill;
Hearts turned to silt are strange to pain;
Tongues that are dumb report no loss;
Hands stiffened, well may idle be;
No sigh is from a breathless breast.
Beauty may fade, but closed eyes see not;
Sorrow may wail, but stopped ears hear not;
Work is, but folded hands need work not;
Nothing to say is for dumb tongues.
The rolling earth rolls on and on
With trees and stones and winding streams—
My dream is what the hill-side dreams!

Cleanthus Trilling

The urge of the seed: the germ.
The urge of the germ: the stalk.
The urge of the stalk: leaves.
The urge of leaves: the blossom.

The urge of the blossom: to scatter pollen.
The urge of the pollen: the imagined dream of life
The urge of life: longing for to-morrow.
The urge of to-morrow: Pain.
The urge of Pain: God.

Henry Ditch

As a boy old bachelors and old maids
Were pointed out to me as hearts of ideal devotion.
Consecrated to the memory of a lost love,
Or a departed love.
It was not that, as I learned for myself,
That kept their souls from marriage:
If the sun of March brings April breezes,
And tempts the blossoms forth

To the numbing fingers of sudden frost,
And the flail of bitter snow,
The soul of the tree sinks down exhausted,
And cannot bud again.
And that is love forced back by fear,
And robbed of its power to try again
In life's precarious garden!

LOUISE HEDEEN

Carve me a cherub! All of me head and wings,
Resting on shoulderless arms that enclosed me.
What was the heart of me? Always the head of me!
What were my longings but restless wings,
Stretched ever for flight in the wonder of waiting,
The far heard cry of a mate, or an April caprice?
Once in the midst of a spring that I searched for,
Spring that I found at the last, in a moment
Off I flew, leaving the blossoms, the vision:
Leaves of the sky between leaves of the lilac;
Skies in my wings' soft hollows, that nestled
With kisses of eyes closed down in passion.
Up then I soared searching the lips of that sky.
I broke my wing with a clinging tendril and fell,
To a covert of grass and roots, where I brooded,
A beauty forsaken, nursing an endless pain!

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY (1869-1910)

From "Song-Flower and Poppy"

IN NEW YORK

He plays the deuce with my writing time,
For the penny my sixth-floor neighbor throws;
He finds me proud of my pondered rhyme,
And he leaves me—well, God knows
It takes the shine from a tunester's line
When a little mate of the deathless Nine
Pipes up under your nose!

For listen, there is his voice again,
Wistful and clear and piercing sweet.
Where did the boy find such a strain
To make a dead heart beat?
And how in the name of care can he bear
To jet such a fountain into the air
In this gray gulch of a street?

Tuscan slopes or the Piedmontese?
Umbria under the Apennine?
South where the terraced lemon-trees

Round rich Sorrento shine?
Venice moon on the smooth lagoon?—
Where have I heard that aching tune,
That boyish throat divine?
. . . . . .

O hark! How it blooms in the falling dark,
That flower of mystical yearning song:
Sad as a hermit-thrush, as a lark
Uplifted, glad, and strong.
Heart, we have chosen the better part!
Save sacred love and sacred art,
Nothing is good for long.

At Assisi

Before St. Francis' burg I wait,
Frozen in spirit, faint with dread;
His presence stands within the gate,
Mild splendor rings his head.
Gently he seems to welcome me:
Know he not I am quick, and he
Is dead, and priest of the dead?

I turn away from the gray church pile;
I dare not enter, thus undone:
Here in the roadside grass awhile
I will lie and watch for the sun.
Too purged of earth's good glee and strife,
Too drained of the honeyed lusts of life
Was the peace these old saints won!

And lo! how the laughing earth says no.
To the fear that mastered me;
To the blood that aches and clamors so
How it whispers "Verily."
Here by my side, marvellous-dyed,
Bold stray-away from the courts of pride,
A poppy-bell flaunts free.

St. Francis sleeps upon his hill,
And a poppy-flower laughs down his creed;
Triumphant light her petals spill,
His shrines are dim indeed.
Men build and plan, but the soul of man,
Coming with haughty eyes to scan,
Feels richer, wilder need.

How long, old builder Time, wilt bide
Till, at thy thrilling word,
Life's crimson pride shall have to bride

The spirit's white accord,
Within that gate of good estate
Which thou must build us soon or late,
Hoar workman of the Lord?

Heart's Wild-Flower

To-night her lids shall lift again, slow, soft, with vague desire,
And lay about my breast and brain their hush of spirit fire,
And I shall take the sweet of pain as the laborer his hire.
And though no word shall e'er be said to ease the ghostly sting,
And though our hearts, unhoused, unfed, must still go wandering,
My sign is set upon her head while stars do meet and sing.

Not such a sign as women wear who make their forehead tame
With life's long tolerance, and bear love's sweetest, humblest name,
Nor such as passion eateth bare with its crown of tears and flame.

Nor such a sign as happy friend sets on his friend's dear brow
When meadow-pipings break and bend to a key of autumn woe,
And the woodland says playtime's at end, best unclasp hands and go.

But where she strays, through blight or blooth, one fadeless flower she wears,
A little gift God gave my youth,—whose petals dim were fears,
Awes, adorations, songs of ruth, hesitancies, and tears.

O heart of mine, with all the powers of white beatitude,
What are the dearest of God's dowers to the children of his blood?
How blow the shy, shy wilding flowers in the hollows of his wood?

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869—)

Luke Havergal

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,—
There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,—

And in the twilight wait for what will come.
The wind will moan, the leaves will whisper some,—
Whisper of her, and strike you as they fall;
But go, and if you trust her she will call.
Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything:
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,—
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That binds you to the way that you must go.
Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,—
Bitter, but one that faith can never miss.
Out of a grave I come to tell you this—
To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.
Go,—for the winds are tearing them away,—
Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,
Nor any more to feel them as they fall;
But go! and if you trust her she will call.
There is the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

Augsburg Seminary Library

[From "The Children of the Night"; copyright, 1896, 1897, by Edwin Arlington Robinson; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.]

Miniver Cheevy

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
  Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
  And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
  When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
  Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace,
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

[From "The Town Down the River"; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.]

The Master

[Supposed to have been written not long after the Civil War]

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;

And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamor to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame,
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smoldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept, Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

[From "The Town Down the River"; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.]

GEORGE STERLING (1869—)

The Black Vulture

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.
And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

A Legend of the Dove

Soft from the linden's bough,
Unmoved against the tranquil afternoon,
Eve's dove laments her now:
"Ah, gone! long gone! Shall I not find thee soon?"

That yearning in his voice
Told not to Paradise a sorrow's tale:
As other birds rejoice
He sang, a brother to the nightingale.

By twilight on her breast
He saw the flower asleep, the star awake,
And calling her from rest,
Made all the dawn melodious for her sake.

And then the Tempter's breath,
The sword of exile and the mortal chain——

The heritage of death,
That gave her heart to dust, his own to pain. . . .

In Eden desolate,
The seraph heard his lonely music swoon,
As now, reiterate:
"Ah, gone! long gone! Shall I not find thee soon?"

Omnia Exeunt in Mysterium

The stranger in the gates—lo! that am I,
And what my land of birth, I do not know,
Nor yet the hidden land to which I go.
One may be lord of many, ere he die,
But know himself he shall not, nor his woe,
Nor to what sea the tears of wisdom flow,
Nor why one star is taken from the sky.

An urging is upon him evermore,
And though he bide, his soul is wanderer,
Scanning the shadows with a sense of haste——
Where fade the tracks of all who went before:
A dim and solitary traveller
On ways that end in evening and in waste.

STEPHEN CRANE (1870-1900)

Why?

Behold, the grave of a wicked man,
And near it, a stern spirit.
There came a drooping maid with violets,
But the spirit grasped her arm.
"No flowers for him," he said.
The maid wept:
"Ah, I loved him."
But the spirit, grim and frowning:
"No flowers for him."

Now, this is it—
If the spirit was just,
Why did the maid weep?

Content

A youth in apparel that glittered
Went to walk in a grim forest.
There he met an assassin
Attired all in garb of old days;
He, scowling through the thickets,
And dagger poised quivering,

Rushed upon the youth.
"Sir," said this latter,
"I am enchanted, believe me.
To die thus,
In this mediæval fashion,
According to the best legends;
Ah, what joy!"
Then took he the wound, smiling,
And died, content.

Ancestry

Once I saw mountains angry,
And ranged in battle-front.
Against them stood a little man;
Ay, he was no bigger than my finger.
I laughed, and spoke to one near me,
"Will he prevail?"
"Surely," replied this other;
"His grandfathers beat them many times."
Then did I see much virtue in grandfathers,—
At least, for the little man
Who stood against the mountains.

T. A. DALY (1871—)

Mia Carlotta

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, "How nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika de steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seelly young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

The Mother

She was so frail, my little one,
She had not yet begun to stir
Her tiny limbs; from sun to sun,
This breast, these arms maternal were
The bounded universe for her.

But now far spaces feel her might,
And sad, sweet thoughts of her arise
With every sun; she stirs the night
With sighing winds, and from the skies
She looks at me with starry eyes.

EDWIN FORD PIPER (1871—)

Sweetgrass Range

Come sell your pony, cowboy—
Sell your pony to me;
Braided bridle and your puncher saddle,
And spend your money free.

"If I should sell my pony,
And ride the range no more,
Nail up my hat and my silver spurs
Above my shanty door;

"And let my door stand open wide
To the snow and the rain and sun;
And bury me under the green sweetgrass
Where you hear the river run."

As I came down the sweetgrass range
And by the cabin door,
I heard a singing in the early dusk
Along the river shore;

I heard a singing to the early stars,
And the tune of a pony's feet.
The joy of the riding singer
I never shall forget.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872-1906)

Discovered

Seen you down at chu'ch las' night,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you done, I seen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wha'd he say?—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me an' I'm yo' pal!
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too, huh name is Sal.
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Compensation

Because I had loved so deeply,
Because I had loved so long,
God in His great compassion
Gave me the gift of song.

Because I have loved so vainly,
And sung with such faltering breath,
The Master, in infinite mercy,
Offers the boon of Death.

FRANCIS SHAW (1872—)

Who Loves the Rain

Who loves the rain,
And loves his home,

And looks on life with quiet eyes,
  Him will I follow through the storm;
  And at his hearth-fire keep me warm;
Nor hell nor heaven shall that soul surprise,
  Who loves the rain,
  And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes.

JOHN COWPER POWYS (1872—)

Candle Light

Hush, true Love, as we sit and think
And talk to shadows and watch the coals
Redden up from beyond the brink
Of the common reach of our souls.

Do you not catch a cry in the air?
No! That is the wind in the chimney calling!
That is a curtain fluttering there!
That is a dead branch falling!

Burning wood when candles are lit
Has a bitter-sweet breath that can carry far;
That can carry two lovers from where they sit
To the edge of the sea and over it
Where the unknown islands are.

Burning wood has a wizard spell
Full of old sad stories and long-dead things;
Like myrrh and cassia is that smell,
From the sepulchres of kings.

And whenever lovers like you and me
Sit together of a winter's night,
There's a cry on the wind, there's a cry on the sea
There's a tongue in the candlelight.

And a great host gathers out of the dark
From wild far places, from sunk sea-walls,
From fallen roofs where hyenas bark
From ruined tents and kraals.

It gathers toward us while you and I
Talk to old shadows and sit and stare,
And let time and space and the world go by
Like smoke upon the air.

And as we gaze at the reddening coals
Lost in that amorous host are we;
That vast procession of lovers' souls
Drowns our identity.

GUY WETMORE CARRYL (1873-1904)

The Sycophantic Fox and the Gullible Raven

A raven sat upon a tree,
And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.
We'll make it any kind you please—
At all events it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"J'admire," said he, *"ton beau plumage,"*
(The which was simply persiflage.)

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost;
And whichsoever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but
He only sighed and answered "Tut."

THE MORAL is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

ARTHUR STRINGER (1874—)

You Bid Me to Sleep

You bid me to sleep,—
But why, O Daughter of Beauty,
Was beauty thus born in the world?
Since out of these shadowy eyes
The wonder shall pass!
And out of this surging and passionate breast
The dream shall depart!
And out of these delicate rivers of warmth
The fire shall wither and fail!

And youth like a bird from your body shall fly!
And Time like a fang on your flesh shall feed!
And this perilous bosom that pulses with love
Shall go down to the dust from which it arose,—
Yet Daughter of Beauty, close,
Close to its sumptuous warmth
You hold my sorrowing head,
And smile with shadowy eyes,
And bid me to sleep again!

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY (1874—)

The Singing Man

He sang above the vineyards of the world.
And after him the vines with woven hands
Clambered and clung, and everywhere unfurled
Triumphing green above the barren lands;

Till high as gardens grow, he climbed, he stood,
Sun-crowned with life and strength, and singing toil,
And looked upon his work; and it was good;
The corn, the wine, the oil.

He sang above the noon. The topmost cleft
That grudged him footing on the mountain scars
He planted and despaired not; till he left
His vines soft breathing to the host of stars.
He wrought, he tilled; and even as he sang,
The creatures of his planting laughed to scorn
The ancient threat of deserts where there sprang
The wine, the oil, the corn!

He sang not for abundance.—Over-lords
Took of his tilth. Yet was there still to reap,
The portion of his labor; dear rewards
Of sunlit day, and bread, and human sleep.
He sang for strength; for glory of the light.
He dreamed above the furrows, "They are mine!"
When all he wrought stood fair before his sight
With corn, and oil, and wine.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

Grieve Not, Ladies

Oh, grieve not, Ladies, if at night
Ye wake to feel your beauty going.
It was a web of frail delight,
Inconstant as an April snowing.

In other eyes, in other lands,
In deep fair pools, new beauty lingers,
But like spent water in your hands
It runs from your reluctant fingers.

Ye shall not keep the singing lark
That owes to earlier skies its duty.
Weep not to hear along the dark
The sound of your departing beauty.

The fine and anguished ear of night
Is tuned to hear the smallest sorrow.
Oh, wait until the morning light!
It may not seem so gone to-morrow!

But honey-pale and rosy-red!
  Brief lights that made a little shining!
Beautiful looks about us shed——
  They leave us to the old repining.

Think not the watchful dim despair
  Has come to you, the first, sweet-hearted!
For oh, the gold in Helen's hair!
  And how she cried when that departed!

Perhaps that one that took the most,
  The swiftest borrower, wildest spender,
May count, as we do not, the cost——
  And grow to us more true and tender.

Happy are we if in his eyes
  We see no shadow of forgetting.
Nay—if our star sinks in those skies
  We shall not wholly see its setting.

Then let us laugh as do the brooks
  That such immortal youth is ours,
If memory keeps for them our looks
  As fresh as are the spring-time flowers.

Oh, grieve not, ladies, if at night
  Ye wake to feel the cold December!
Rather recall the early light
  And in your loved one's arms, remember.

The Monk in the Kitchen

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo—I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,

Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air——
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings—
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon—
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He requires of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,

And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful—but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried—"Thou art

The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?"—And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid air.
Nay—thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

AMY LOWELL (1874-1925)

Anticipation

I have been temperate always,
But I am like to be very drunk
With your coming.
There have been times
I feared to walk down the street
Lest I should reel with the wine of you,
And jerk against my neighbors
As they go by.
I am parched now, and my tongue is horrible in my mouth,
But my brain is noisy
With the clash and gurgle of filling wine-cups.

A Gift

See! I give myself to you, Beloved!
My words are little jars
For you to take and put upon a shelf.
Their shapes are quaint and beautiful,
And they have many pleasant colors and lustres
To recommend them.
Also the scent from them fills the room
With sweetness of flowers and crushed grasses.

When I shall have given you the last one
You will have the whole of me,
But I shall be dead.

THEODOSIA GARRISON (1874—)

Stains

The three ghosts on the lonesome road
Spake each to one another,

"Whence came that stain about your mouth
No lifted hand may cover?"
"From eating of forbidden fruit,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the sunless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that red burn on your foot
No dust nor ash may cover?"
"I stamped a neighbor's hearth-flame out,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the windless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that blood upon your hand
No other hand may cover?"
"From breaking of a woman's heart,
Brother, my brother."

"Yet on the earth clean men we walked,
Glutton and Thief and Lover;
White flesh and fair it hid our stains
That no man might discover."
"Naked the soul goes up to God,
Brother, my brother."

ROBERT W. SERVICE (1874—)

The Song of the Soldier-Born

Give me the scorn of the stars and a peak defiant;
Wail of the pines and a wind with the shout of a giant;
Night and a trail unknown and a heart reliant.

Give me to live and love in the old, bold fashion;
A soldier's billet at night and a soldier's ration:
A heart that leaps to the fight with a soldier's passion.

For I hold as a simple faith there's no denying:
The trade of a soldier's the only trade worth plying;
The death of a soldier's the only death worth dying.

So let me go and leave your safety behind me;
Go to the spaces of hazard where nothing shall bind me;
Go till the word is War—and then you will find me.

Then you will call me and claim me because you will need me;
Cheer me and gird me and into the battle-wrath speed me. . . .
And when it's over, spurn me and no longer heed me.

For guile and a purse gold-greased are the arms you carry;
With deeds of paper you fight and with pens you parry;
You call on the hounds of the law your foes to harry.

You with your "Art for its own sake," posing and prinking;
You with your "Live and be merry," eating and drinking;
You with your "Peace at all hazard," from bright blood shrinking.

Fools! I will tell you now: though the red rain patters,
And a million of men go down, it's little it matters. . . .
There's the Flag unflung to the stars, though it streams in tatters.

There's a glory gold never can buy to yearn and to cry for;
There's a hope that's as old as the sky to suffer and sigh for;
There's a faith that out-dazzles the sun to martyr and die for.

Ah no! it's my dream that War will never be ended;
That men will perish like men, and valor be splendid;
That the Flag by the sword will be served, and honor defended.

That the tale of my fights will never be ancient story;
That though my eye may be dim and my beard be hoary,
I'll die as a soldier dies on the Field of Glory.

So give me a strong right arm for a wrong's swift righting;
Stave of a song on my lips as my sword is smiting;
Death in my boots may-be, but fighting, fighting.

[From "Rhymes of a Red Cross Man," by Robert W. Service, author of "Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses," "Ballads of a Cheechako" and "Ballads of a Bohemian," published by Barse & Hopkins, New York.]

ROSE O'NEILL (1874—)

Love-Ending

Go, go,
Complete the overthrow!
Low lutes that were so loud!
Proud eyes for weeping!
(O, poor that were so proud!)
Tall grain for good reaping—

Slain kings for sound sleeping!
Cold hearts no hearth shall warm!
Long roads for rueing!
How to perform
This wonder of undoing!

Beat down
The alabaster town!
With what downfall!
Of amethystine hall!
Shatter the towers,
The feasts of fruit and flowers,
The crystal cups and all—
Tear the silver sleeve
And break the golden bell!
How to achieve
This pale feat of farewell!

Part, part,
Loose the prisoned heart!
The velvet vassal flies—
To the wind he goes!
But no, he turns and lies
Against me like a rose,
With his slaying eyes!
Intercept the sun
That I may not see!
How to be done
With this Gethsemane!

Wait, wait,
Rend the delicate,
The woven strands with care:
With care divide
The intertwinèd hair,
And side from side
Withdraw the fair from fair!
Make far the fair and fain!
Fold back the stubborn arm!
How to attain
This irretrievable harm!

Undo
The arms that tether you!
Unclasp the impearlèd belt
Softly not to wound;
Let the girdle melt,
Parting, half unfelt
Where once the lover swooned.

Still, the fingers hold;
The moony cincture tying!
How to be bold
With this excess of dying!

Be still;
Yield th' embracing will!
Close the fluted ears
On flutes that cease to speak.
Never any more
Spill the honied tears
Down the kissèd cheek!
Come out and close the door,
Nor listen at the key.
How to restore
The plucked fruit to the tree!

Then, then,
Turn back and part again!
Console the ruined love!
The crownèd creature falls
With his illustrious walls.
How fares my dove?
See who leans and calls!
Look once more. And so—
Close from further knowing.
How, now, to go
With this redeemless going!

There, there,
Leave the folden Care!
Let the heapèd heaven—
The princely prostrate lie.
Last—the Look be riven!
Then go carefully,
Lest he stir and sigh.
So, with subtle stride
The dead are left with speed.
How now to hide
The consummated deed!

Faun-Taken

Who was it then that lately took me in the wood?
And was it I that lay twice seven nights on leaves,
With musky hair against my side!
That cruel hair that kept me kindly from the cold!
Gold, gold!
Of yellow eyes that glance and hide!
Am I the maddened one that goes—and grieves
For lack of laughter laughing till I died?

Oh, drouth of grapey laughter, dearth and drouth!
Twice seyen days are but a blurring ring
That circles round the corner of a mouth!
Oh, wide, wide mouths that bellow so, or fling
That fluting up to birds like spurted wine!
But, ah, no more, those sounds without a name—
No more that ambiguous grace of god and ape,
Where strange feet dance upon the dripping grape—
Those feet one must not see—that wounded mine!

Let me but once look back again and pass.
Once only see him again—and groan and go—
The lips that laugh in the grass—
That kiss in a way one must not know!
The lips that cling the mouths of pipes and suck
The roots of frightened flowers too pale to pluck;
The curls that vine o'er what one must not see—
Those horney hiders that so gorèd me!
Then, run and run—again to the hearths, the roofs!
But close behind,—the pipes, the pipes,—the hoofs!

ZONA GALE (1874—)

The Sky-Goer

He understood what it is that we are trying to work out.
He was very old, and from the secret swing of planets
To the secret decencies in human hearts, he understood.
I used to watch him watering his lawn, scattering the food
for the woodpecker,
Sweeping the crossing before his house. It was not that there
was light
About him, visible to the eye, as in the old paintings.
Rather, an influence came from him in little breaths.
When we were with him we became other.
He saw us all as if we were that which we dreamed our-
selves.
He saw the town already clothed on for its To-morrow,
He saw the world, beating like a heart, beating like a heart.
"How may I, too, know?" I wanted to cry to him. Instead
I only said: "And how is it with you?" But he answered
Both questions by the look in his eyes. For he had come to
quietness.
He had come to the place where sun and moon meet
And where the spaces of the heavens open their doors.
He was understanding and love and the silence.
He was the voice of these, as he fed the woodpecker.

North Star

His boy had stolen some money from a booth
At the County Fair. I found the father in his kitchen.
For years he had driven a dray and the heavy lifting
Had worn him down. So through his evenings
He slept by the kitchen stove as I found him.
The mother was crying and ironing.
I thought about the mother,
For she brought me a photograph
Taken at a street fair on her wedding day.
She was so trim and white and he so neat and alert.
In the picture with their friends about them—
I saw that she wanted me to know their dignity from the first.
But afterward I thought more about the father.
For as he came with me to the door
I could not forbear to say how bright and near the stars seemed.
Then he leaned and peered from beneath his low roof
And he said:
"There used to be a star called the Nord Star."

FREDERIC RIDGELY TORRENCE (1875—)

The Singers in a Cloud

Overhead at sunset all heard the choir.
Nothing could be seen except jewelled gray
Raining beauty earthward, flooding with desire
All things that listened there in the broken day;
Songs from freer breathers, their unprisoned fire
Out of cloudy fountains, flying and hurled,
Fell and warmed the world.

Sudden came a wind and birds were laid bare,
Only music warmed them round their brown breasts.
They had sent the splendors pouring through the air,
Love was their heat and home far above their nests.
Light went softly out and left their voices there:
Starward passed forever all that great cry,
Burning, round the sky.

On the earth the battles war against light,
Heavy lies the harrow, bitter the field.
Beauty, like a river running through the night,

Streams past the stricken ones whom it would have healed,
But the darkened faces turn away from sight.
Blind, bewildered nations sow, reap and fall,
Shadows gather all.

Far above the birdsong bright shines the gold.
Through the starry orchards earth's paths are hung;
As she moves among them glowing fruits unfold,
So that the heavens there reawaken young.
Overhead is beauty, healing for the old.
Overhead is morning, nothing but youth,
Only lovely youth.

Evensong

Beauty calls and gives no warning,
Shadows rise and wander on the day.
In the twilight, in the quiet evening,
We shall rise and smile and go away.
Over the flaming leaves
Freezes the sky.
It is the season grieves,
Not you, not I.
All our spring-times, all our summers,
We have kept the longing warm within.
Now we leave the after-comers
To attain the dreams we did not win.
Oh, we have wakened, Sweet, and had our birth,
And that's the end of earth;
And we have toiled and smiled and kept the light,
And that's the end of night.

PERCY MACKAYE (1875—)

The Automobile

Fluid the world flowed under us: the hills
  Billow on billow of umbrageous green
  Heaved us, aghast, to fresh horizons, seen
One rapturous instant, blind with flash of rills
And silver-rising storms and dewy stills
  Of dripping boulders, till the dim ravine
  Drowned us again in leafage, whose serene
Coverts grew loud with our tumultuous wills.

Then all of Nature's old amazement seemed
  Sudden to ask us: "Is this also man?
  This plunging, volant, land-amphibian

What Plato mused and Paracelsus dreamed?
Reply!" And piercing us with ancient scan,
The shrill, primeval hawk gazed down—and screamed.

France

Half artist and half anchorite,
Part siren and part Socrates,
Her face—alluring and yet recondite—
Smiled through her salons and academies.

Lightly she wore her double mask,
Till sudden, at war's kindling spark,
Her inmost self, in shining mail and casque,
Blazed to the world her single soul—
Jeanne d'Arc!

WILLA SIBERT CATHER (1875—)

The Palatine

IN THE "DARK AGES"

"Have you been with the King to Rome,
Brother, big brother?"
"I've been there and I've come home,
Back to your play, little brother."

"Oh, how high is Cæsar's house,
Brother, big brother?"
"Goats about the doorways browse;
Night-hawks nest in the burnt roof-tree.
Home of the wild bird and home of the bee,
A thousand chambers of marble lie
Wide to the sun and the wind and the sky.
Poppies we find amongst our wheat
Grow on Cæsar's banquet seat.
Cattle crop and neat-herds drowse
On the floors of Cæsar's house."

"But what has become of Cæsar's gold,
Brother, big brother?"
"The times are bad and the world is old——
Who knows the where of the Cæsar's gold?
Night comes black o'er the Cæsar's hill;
The wells are deep and the tales are ill;
Fireflies gleam in the damp and mold——
All that is left of the Cæsar's gold.
Back to your play, little brother."

"What has become of the Cæsar's men,
Brother, big brother?"
"Dogs in the kennel and wolf in the den
Howl for the fate of the Cæsar's men,
Slain in Asia, slain in Gaul,
By Dacian border and Persian wall.
Rhineland orchard and Danube fen
Fatten their roots on Cæsar's men."

"Why is the world so sad and wide,
Brother, big brother?"
"Saxon boys by their fields that bide
Need not know if the world is wide.
Climb no mountain but Shere-end hill,
Cross no water but goes to mill.
Ox in the stable and cow in the byre,
Smell of the wood-smoke and sleep by the fire;
Sun-up in seed-time—a likely lad
Hurts not his head that the world is sad.
Back to your play, little brother."

ROBERT FROST (1875—)

After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how one way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I——
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Birches

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter, darker trees,

I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells,
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust——
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.

They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterward, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows——
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer and winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left

For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.

May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place to love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk,
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

ELEANOR ROGERS COX (1875—)

To a Portrait of Whistler in the Brooklyn Art Museum

What waspish whim of Fate
  Was this that bade you here
Hold dim, unhonored state,
  No single courtier near?

Is there, of all who pass,
  No choice, discerning few
To poise the ribboned glass
  And gaze enwrapt on you?

Sword-soul that from its sheath
  Laughed leaping to the fray,
How calmly underneath
  Goes Brooklyn on her way!

Quite heedless of that smile—
  Half-devil and half-god,
Your quite unequalled style,
  The airy heights you trod.

Ah, could you from earth's breast
  Come back to take the air,
What matter here for jest
  Most exquisite and rare!

But since you may not come,
  Since silence holds you fast,
Since all your quips are dumb
  And all your laughter past—

I give you mine instead,
  And something with it too
That Brooklyn leaves unsaid—
  The world's fine homage due.

Ah, Prince, you smile again—
"My faith, the court is small!"
I know, dear James—but then
It's I or none at all!

LOUISE DRISCOLL (1875—)

Marigolds

Do you like marigolds?
If you do
Then my garden is
Gay for you!

I've been cutting their
Fragrant stalks
Where they lean on
The garden walks.

The head's too heavy for
The brittle stem,
A careless touch and
You've broken them.

Each one shines like a
Separate star
Set in some heaven where
Gardens are.

My hands smell of the
Herblike scent,
Telling what garden
Way I went.

Pungent, vivid and
Strong, they stay
Long after Summer has
Gone away.

Do you like marigolds?
Here's a pledge
To meet the frost with
A golden edge—

To go as far as
A weak thing may
Linking tomorrow with
Yesterday!

Harbury

All the men of Harbury go down to the sea in ships,
The wind upon their faces, the salt upon their lips.

The little boys of Harbury when they are laid to sleep,
Dream of masts and cabins and the wonders of the deep.

The women-folk of Harbury have eyes like the sea,
Wide with watching wonder, deep with mystery.

I met a woman: "Beyond the bar," she said,
"Beyond the shallow water where the green lines spread,

"Out beyond the sand-bar and the white spray,
My three sons wait for the Judgment Day."

I saw an old man who goes to sea no more,
Watch from morn to evening down on the shore.

"The sea's a hard mistress," the old man said;
"The sea is always hungry and never full fed.

"The sea had my father and took my son from me—
Sometimes I think I see them, walking on the sea!

"I'd like to be in Harbury on the Judgment Day,
When the word is spoken and the sea is wiped away.

"And all the drowned fisher boys, with seaweed in their hair,
Rise and walk to Harbury to greet the women there.

"I'd like to be in Harbury to see the souls arise,
Son and mother hand in hand, lovers with glad eyes.

"I think there would be many who would turn and look with me,
Hoping for another glimpse of the cruel sea!

"They tell me that in Paradise the fields are green and still,
With pleasant flowers everywhere that all may take who will,

"And four great rivers flowing from out the Throne of God
That no one ever drowns in and souls may cross dry-shod.

"I think among those wonders there will be men like me,
Who miss the old salt danger of the singing sea.

"For in my heart, like some old shell, inland, safe and dry,
Anyone who harks will still hear the sea cry."

GRACE FALLOW NORTON (1876—)

O Sleep

Take me upon thy breast,
O river of rest.
Draw me down to thy side,
Slow-moving tide.
Carry out beyond reach
Of song or of speech
This body and soul forespent.
To thy still continent,
Where silence hath his home,
Where I would come,
Bear me now in thy deep
Bosom, Sleep,
O Sleep.

ARTHUR UPSON (1877-1908)

From "The City"

AGAMEDE'S SONG

Grow, grow, thou little tree,
His body at the roots of thee;
Since last year's loveliness in death
The living beauty nourisheth.

Bloom, bloom, thou little tree,
Thy roots around the heart of me;
Thou can'st not blow too white and fair
From all the sweetness hidden there.

Die, die, thou little tree,
And be as all sweet things must be;
Deep where thy petals drift, I, too,
Would rest the changing seasons through.

Ex Libris

In an old book at even as I read
Fast fading words adown my shadowy page,
I crossed a tale of how, in other age,
At Arqua, with his books around him, sped
The word to Petrarch; and with noble head
Bowed gently o'er his volume, that sweet sage
To silence paid his willing seigniorage.
And they who found him, whispered, "He is dead!"

Thus timely from old comradeships would I
To silence also rise. Let there be night,
Stillness, and only those staid watchers by,
And no light shine save my low study light—
Lest of his kind intent some human cry
Interpret not the messenger aright.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE (1877—)

Baboon

At eight o'clock in the evening,
And at two in the afternoon,
The monster curtains open,
The fiddles creak and croon,
And then I bow to the people,
A lumbering baboon.

I wonder why I do it?
Why do the humans stare
From even rows of shadow
Behind the footlights' glare?
Why do I go through my weary tricks
On a table and a chair?

They laugh and clap and giggle,
They never seem to tire,
For I am quite amusing
As I dance upon a wire,
Or leap, at my master's signal,
Through golden hoops of fire.

I cannot smile, like the people,
I cannot speak at all;
I pirouette insanely
In the foolish carnival;
Yet could I laugh, O I would laugh
When the velvet curtains fall!

For I wonder why those people
Sit in such even rows,
And smile at my useless knowledge,
Laugh at my mincing toes,
And dream that they have wisdom!—
How little a human knows!

And why do they always gather
In houses bright and hot,
When they might be out in the open
In a place I've never forgot?
Why do they hive in a shell like this,
And bid me share their lot?

And why is my life a schedule,
Run by rote and rule?
I was not meant for theatres,
I was not made for school;
I was not meant to caper here,
A thing of ridicule!

I was not meant to be the slave
Of a man in a shiny suit,
To bring the golden dollars in,
To stand up and salute;
The good God put me in the world
To be a happy brute!

But at eight o'clock each evening,
And at two in the afternoon,
The monster curtains open,
The fiddles creak and croon;
And I bow to the senseless people—
A sensible baboon!

Of One Self-Slain

When he went blundering back to God,
His songs half written, his work half done,
Who knows what paths his bruised feet trod,
What hills of peace or pain he won?

I hope God smiled, and took his hand,
And said, "Poor truant, passionate fool!
Life's book is hard to understand—
Why couldst thou not remain at school?"

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY (1878-1914)

Dirge

Never the nightingale,
Oh, my dear,
Never again the lark
Thou wilt hear;

Though dusk and the morning still
Tap at thy window-sill,
Though ever love call and call
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

The Lonely Death

In the cold I will rise, I will bathe
In waters of ice; myself
Will shiver and shrive myself,
Alone in the dawn, and anoint
Forehead and feet and hands;
I will shutter the windows from light,
I will place in their sockets the four
Tall candles and set them a-flame
In the grey of the dawn; and myself
Will lay myself straight in my bed,
And draw the sheet under my chin.

DON MARQUIS (1878—)

The Name

It shifts and shifts from form to form,
It drifts and darkles, glooms and glows,
It is the passion of the storm,
The poignance of the rose;
Through changing shapes, through devious ways,
By noon or night, through cloud or flame,
My heart hath followed all my days
Something I cannot name.

In sunlight on some woman's hair,
Or starlight in some woman's eyne—
Or in low laughter smothered where
Her red lips wedded mine—
My heart has known, and thrilled to know,
This unnamed presence that it sought;
And when thy heart hath found it so,
"Love is the name," I thought.

Sometimes when sudden afterglows
In futile glory storm the skies
Within their transient gold and rose
The secret stirs and dies;
Or when the trembling Morn walks o'er
The troubled seas with feet of flame
My awed heart whispers, *"Ask no more,*
For Beauty is the name!"

Or dreaming in old chapels where
The dim aisles pulse with murmurings
That part are music, part are prayer—
(Or rush of hidden wings)—
I often lift a startled head
To some saint's carven countenance,
Half fancying that the lips have said,
"All names mean God perchance."

Those That Come Back

I, too, have heard strange whispers, seen
A stealthy mist rise from the Summer's green,
And felt, even in the loud and candid noon,
A central silence and chill secrecy
Laid close against the human heat of me;
But never under sun nor moon,
Nor through the choked, ambiguous utterance of the rain,
Has any presence made his meaning plain . . .
Perhaps these ghosts are helpless ghosts and weak,
Or when they see us, grow too sad to speak.

The Tom-Cat

At midnight in the alley
A Tom-cat comes to wail,
And he chants the hate of a million years
As he swings his snaky tail.

Malevolent, bony, brindled,
Tiger and devil and bard,
His eyes are coals from the middle of Hell
And his heart is black and hard.

He twists and crouches and capers
And bares his curved sharp claws,
And he sings to the stars of the jungle nights
Ere cities were, or laws.

Beast from a world primeval,
He and his leaping clan,
When the blotched red moon leers over the roofs,
Give voice to their scorn of man.

He will lie on a rug to-morrow
And lick his silky fur,
And veil the brute in his yellow eyes
And play he's tame, and purr.

But at midnight in the alley
He will crouch again and wail,
And beat the time for his demon's song
With the swing of his demon's tail.

The Spinks

Dear Mrs. Spink has had so very many
Doctors! . . . a fact of which her lord seems proud.
I've heard him urging in a jolly crowd:
"Tell them about that last big tumor, Jenny!"
And Jenny lisps and tells, nor spares us any
Details . . . She tells us All! And we sit bowed
And listen while Spink murmurs half aloud:
"Her stomach has cost me a pretty penny!"

And after dinner, with the coffee cup,
The Spinks perform a friendly fireside clinic
And she glows as her husband cuts her up,
And his the zest of any surgeon-cynic . . .
I never knew before, I sometimes think,
A woman half so well as Mrs. Spink.

A Gentleman of Fifty Soliloquizes

Should chance strike out of me some human heat
Leap not at that and think to grasp my soul!
I flee new bonds. My self must still retreat
Down devious ways to keep me free and whole.

Give me your mind, and I will give you mine.
Then should it change no heart will bleed or burn.
Give me your wits. I want no heart of thine.
You'll ask too much of life-blood in return.

There was a golden lad in years long gone . . .
We twain together left the ways of men
And roamed the starry heights, the fields of dawn,
In youth and gladness. This comes not again.

Give me your mirth. It bores me when you weep.
My loves you cannot touch. They're buried deep.

CARL SANDBURG (1878—)

Chicago

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,

Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:
They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing at a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

At a Window

Give me hunger,
O you gods that sit and give
The world its orders.
Give me hunger, pain and want,
Shut me out with shame and failure
From your doors of gold and fame,
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger!

But leave me a little love,
A voice to speak to me in the day end,
A hand to touch me in the dark room
Breaking the long loneliness.

In the dusk of day-shapes
Blurring the sunset,
One little wandering, western star
Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow
Let me go to the window,
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk
And wait and know the coming
Of a little love.

Joy

Let Joy keep you.
Reach out your hands
And take it when it runs by,
As the Apache dancer
Clutches his woman.
I have seen them
Live long and laugh loud,
Sent on singing, singing,
Smashed to the heart
Under the ribs
With a terrible love.
Joy always,
Joy everywhere——
Let joy kill you!
Keep away from little deaths.

ELSA BARKER

The Frozen Grail

(To Peary and his men, before the last expedition)

Why sing the legends of the Holy Grail,
The dead crusaders of the Sepulchre,
While these men live? Are the great bards all dumb?
Here is a vision to shake the blood of Song,
And make Fame's watchman tremble at his post.

What shall prevail against the spirit of man,
When cold, the lean and snarling wolf of hunger,
The threatening spear of ice-mailed Solitude,
Silence, and space, and ghostly-footed fear

Prevail not? Dante, in his frozen hell
Shivering, endured no bleakness like the void
These men have warmed with their own flaming will,
And peopled with their dreams. The wind from fierce
Arcturus in their faces, at their backs
The whip of the world's doubt, and in their souls
Courage to die—if death shall be the price
Of that cold cup that will assuage their thirst;
They climb and fall and stagger toward the goal.
They lay themselves the road whereby they travel,
And sue God for a franchise. Does He watch
Behind the lattice of the boreal lights?
In that grail chapel of their stern-vowed quest,
Ninety of God's long paces towards the North,
Will they behold the splendor of His face?
To conquer the world must man renounce the world?
These have renounced it. Had ye only faith
Ye might move mountains, said the Nazarene.
Why, these have faith to move the zones of man
Out to the point where All and Nothing meet.
They catch the bit of death between their teeth,
In one wild dash to trample the unknown
And leap the gates of Knowledge. They have dared
Even to defy the sentinel that guards
The doors of the forbidden—dared to hurl
Their breathing bodies after the Ideal,
That like the heavenly kingdom must be taken
Only by violence. The star that leads
The leader of this quest has held the world
True to its orbit for a million years.

And shall he fail? They never fail who light
Their lamp of faith on the unwavering flame
Burnt for the altar service of the Race
Since the beginning. He shall find the strange—
The white immaculate Virgin of the North,
Whose steady gaze no mortal ever dared,
Whose icy hand no human ever grasped.
In the dread silence and the solitude
She waits and listens through the centuries
For one indomitable, destined soul,
Born to endure the glory of her eyes,
And lift his warm lips to the frozen Grail.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Remembrance: Greek Folk-Song

Not unto the forest—not unto the forest, O my lover!
Why do you lead me to the forest?

Joy is where the temples are, lines of dancers swinging far,
Drums and lyres and viols in the town
(It is dark in the forest)
And the flapping leaves will blind me and the clinging vines will bind me
And the thorny rose boughs tear my saffron gown—
And I fear the forest.

Not unto the forest—not unto the forest, O my lover!
There was one once who led me to the forest:
Hand in hand we wandered mute, where was neither lyre nor flute,
Little stars were bright against the dusk
(There was wind in the forest)
And the thicket of wild rose breathed across our lips locked close
Dizzy perfumings of spikenard and musk . . .
I am tired of the forest.

Not unto the forest—not unto the forest, O my lover!
Take me from the silence of the forest!
I will love you by the light and the beat of drums at night
And echoing of laughter in my ears,
But here in the forest
I am still, remembering a forgotten, useless thing,
And my eyelids are locked down for fear of tears—
There is memory in the forest.

The Factories

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing-time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark).
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sinlit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn).
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

ALICE BLAINE DAMROSCH

Swimming by Night

It is night-time; all the waters round me
Grow electric, tenser, in the starlight.
See, the Milky Way is full of splendor.
Over there the white star and the red star
Beckon from their pinnacles of silence.
All the larger waves are tipped with glory,
And the little ripples pause and whisper,
As they touch my cheek with ghostly fingers.
I will swim till I can swim no longer.
I will spurn the shore that blots the starlight
From my vision, I will shake it from me,
Strike out boldly into open waters.
I know sometime that my strength will falter,
That I must turn shoreward, leave my star-search,
Give in to the sweet, soft, acquiescent
Land breeze, redolent with sleeping hay-fields.
How I hate it, I would fill my nostrils
With the sharper, freer breath of heaven,
Raising up my head once in so often
From the waters for great drafts of glory.
In me is the strength of gods; I battle
With the waves and buffet them for pleasure,
I will beat them, break them in my passing,
Feel them close again behind my shoulder;
Every muscle has its strength for service,
Now I summon all to do my pleasure,
Bid them bear me out into the darkness.
Far off where the startled night bird circles,
Half awakened by my silent coming,
Frightened by my dim arm rising, falling,
I will go, yes, there and even farther.
I will seek the source of the creation,
Swim with mighty strokes to the horizon,
Where the drowned stars and the stars in heaven
Meet and mingle in new constellations;

I will reach them, dare to touch them even,
Cleansed and purified by many waters,
Even I may breathe upon their splendor.
It is written that the night must vanish,
But this hour is mine, I will not yield it,
I defy the dawn to take it from me. . . .
Oh, to live and battle thus forever!

NICHOLAS VACHEL LINDSAY (1879—)

From "The Congo"

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, [A deep
Pounded on the table, rolling bass.]
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, *boom,*
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, *boom.*
Then I had religion, *then* I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
Then I saw the Congo, creeping through the black, [More
Cutting through the jungle with a golden track. deliberate.
Then along that riverbank Solemnly chanted.]
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. [A rapidly piling
And *"Blood!"* screamed the whistles and the fifes climax
of the warriors; of speed and racket.]
"Blood!" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors;
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, *boom!"*
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune [With a philosophic pause.]
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible, [Shrilly and with a
Foam-flanked and terrible. heavily accented metre.]
Boom, steal the pygmies,
Boom, kill the Arabs,
Boom, kill the white men,

Hoo, Hoo, Hoo. [Like the wind
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost in the chimney.]
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, [All the
And all of the other sounds very golden.
Gods of the Congo, Heavy accents very
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, heavy. Light accents
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, very light. Last line
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." whispered.]

General William Booth Enters into Heaven

(To be sung to tune of The Blood of the Lamb with indicated instruments.)

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said, "He's come."
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? [Bass drum]
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—
Minds still passion ridden, soul-powers frail!
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath
Unwashed legions with the ways of death——
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over—Booth had groaned for more.
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang! [Banjos]
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free!
Loons with bazoos blowing blare, blare, blare——
On, on, upward through the golden air.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief: [Bass drums
Eagle countenance in sharp relief, slower and
Beard a-flying, air of high command softer]
Unabated in that holy land.
Jesus came from out the Court-House door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there [Flutes]
Round and round the mighty Court-House Square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled,
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl; [Bass drums
Sages and sybils now, and athletes clean, louder and
Rulers of empires, and of forests green! faster]
The hosts were sandalled and their wings were fire——
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir. [Grand
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? chorus
Oh, shout Salvation! it was good to see tambourines
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free. ——all
The banjos rattled and the tambourines instruments
Jing-jing-jangled in the hands of Queens! in full blast]
And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer,
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.

Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the Soldier while the throng knelt [Reverently
down. Sung—no
He saw King Jesus—they were face to face, instruments]
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

The Eagle That Is Forgotten
(John P. Altgeld, 1847-1902)

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you . . . and laid you away.
The others, that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor,
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more.
Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call,
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons.
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.
Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more than to live in a name!—

The Flower of Mending

(To Eudora, after I had had certain dire adventures)

When Dragon-fly would fix his wings,
When Snail would patch his house,
When moths have marred the overcoat
Of tender Mister Mouse,

The pretty creatures go with haste
To the sunlit blue-grass hills
Where the Flower of Mending yields the wax
And webs to help their ills.

The hour the coats are waxed and webbed
They fall into a dream,
And when they wake the ragged robes
Are joined without a seam.

My heart is but a dragon-fly,
My heart is but a mouse,
My heart is but a haughty snail
On a little stony house.

Your hand was honey-comb to heal,
Your voice a web to bind.
You were a Mending Flower to me
To cure my heart and mind.

LOUIS V. LEDOUX (1880—)

From "The Story of Eleusis"

Hymn to Demeter

Weave the dance, and raise again the sacred chorus;
Wreathe the garlands of the spring about the hair;
Now once more the meadows burst in bloom before us,
Crying swallows dart and glitter through the air.
Glints the plowshare in the brown and fragrant furrow;
Pigeons coo in shady coverts as they pair;
Come the furtive mountain folk from cave and burrow,
Lean, and blinking at the sunlight's sudden glare.

Bright through midmost heaven moves the lesser Lion;
Hide the Hyades in ocean caverns hoar;
Past the shoulders of the sunset flames Orion,
Following the sisters seaward evermore,
Gleams the east at evening, lit by low Arcturus;
Out to subtle-scented dawns beside the shore,
Yet a little and the Pleiades will lure us:
Weave the dance and raise the chorus as of yore.
Far to eastward up the fabled gulf of Issus,
Northward, southward, westward, now the trader goes,
Passing headlands clustered yellow with narcissus,
Bright with hyacinth, with poppy, and with rose,
Shines the sea and falls the billow as undaunted,
Past the rising of the stars that no man knows,
Sails he onward through the islands siren-haunted,
Till the clashing gates of rock before him close.

Kindly Mother of the beasts and birds and flowers,
Gracious bringer of the barley and the grain,
Earth awakened feels thy sunlight and thy showers;
Great Demeter! Let us call thee not in vain;
Lead us safely from the seed-time to the threshing,
Past the harvest and the vineyard's purple stain;
Let us see thy corn-pale hair the sunlight meshing,
When the sounding flails of autumn swing again.

JOHN G. NEIHARDT (1881—)

April Theology

Oh, to be breathing and hearing and feeling and seeing!
Oh, the ineffably glorious privilege of being!
All of the World's lovely girlhood, unfleshed and made spirit,
Broods out in the sunlight this morning—I see it, I hear it!

So read me no text, O my Brothers, and preach me no creeds;
I am busy beholding the glory of God in His deeds!
See! Everywhere buds coming out, blossoms flaming, bees humming!
Glad athletic Growers up-reaching, things striving, becoming!

Oh, I know in my heart, in the sun-quickened, blossoming soul of me,
This something called self is a part, but the World is the whole of me!
I am one with these growers, these singers, these earnest becomers—
Co-heirs of the summer to be and past æons of summers!

I kneel not nor grovel; no prayer with my lips shall I fashion.
Close-knit in the fabric of things, fused with one common passion—
To go on and become something greater—we Growers are one;
None more in the World than a bird and none less than the sun;
But all woven into the glad indivisible Scheme,
God fashioning out in the Finite a part of His Dream!

Out here where the world-love is flowing, unfettered, unpriced,
I feel all the depth of the man-soul and girl-heart of Christ!
'Mid this riot of pink and white flame in this miracle weather,
Soul to soul, merged in one, God and I dream the vast Dream together.
We are one in the doing of things that are done and to be:
I am part of my God as a raindrop is part of the Sea!

What! House me my God! Take me in where no blossoms are blowing?
No riot of green and no sky, and no bird-song, no growing?
Parcel out what is already mine, like a vender of staples?
See! Yonder my God burns revealed in the sap-drunken maples!

WITTER BYNNER (1881—)

From "The New World"

. . . . . .

Grieve not for the invisible transported brow
On which like leaves the dark hair grew,
Nor for those lips of laughter that are now
Laughing in sun and dew,
Nor for those limbs that, fallen low
And seeming faint and slow,
Shall alter and renew
Their shape and hue
Like birches white before the moon
Or the wild cherry-bough
In spring or the round sea
And shall pursue
More ways of swiftness than the swallow dips
Among and find more winds than ever blew
The straining sails of unimpeded ships!
Mourn not! . . . Yield only happy tears
To deeper beauty than appears!

The Mystic

By seven vineyards on one hill
We walked. The native wine
In clusters grew beside us two,
For your lips and for mine,

When "Hark!" you said—"Was that a bell
In a bubbling spring we heard?"
But I was wise and closed my eyes
And listened to a bird;

For as summer leaves are bent and shake
With singers passing through,
So moves in me continually
The winged breath of you.

You tasted from a single vine
And took from that your fill—
But I inclined to every kind,
All seven on one hill.

PADRAIC COLUM (1881—)

The Sea Bird to the Wave

On and on,
O white brother!

Thunder does not daunt thee!
How thou movest!
By thine impulse—
With no wing!
Fairest thing
The wide sea shows me!
On and on
O white brother!
Art thou gone!

River-Mates

I'll be an otter, and I'll let you swim
A mate beside me; we will venture down
A deep, dark river, when the sky above
Is shut of the sun; spoilers are we,
Thick-coated; no dog's tooth can bite at our veins,
With eyes and ears of poachers; deep earthed ones
Turned hunters; let him slip past
The little vole; my teeth are on an edge
For the King-fish of the River!

I hold him up,
The glittering salmon that smells of the sea;
I hold him high and whistle!
Now we go
Back to our earths; we will tear and eat
Sea-smelling salmon; you will tell the cubs
I am the Booty-bringer, I am the Lord
Of the River; the deep, dark, full and flowing River!

FRANKLIN P. ADAMS (1881—)

The Rich Man

The rich man has his motor-car,
His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
And jeers at Fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
You bet I would!

HERMANN HAGEDORN (1882—)

Departure

My true love from her pillow rose
And wandered down the summer lane.
She left her house to the wind's carouse,
And her chamber wide to the rain.

She did not stop to don her coat,
She did not stop to smooth her bed—
But out she went in glad content
There where the bright path led.

She did not feel the beating storm,
But fled like a sunbeam, white and frail,
To the sea, to the air, somewhere, somewhere—
I have not found her trail.

THOMAS S. JONES, JR. (1882—)

Sometimes

Across the fields of yesterday
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
The man I might have been.

From the Hills

For you the white-wracked waste—yet not for me—
The roar of tempests and the storm-god's song,
All that is sad and strange and sweet at sea,
All that is fierce and strong.

I too have tasted of the salt-sea wine
And heard a-riot the wild winds at play;
The heart's full beat, the joyous anodyne
Of salt-sea spray.

This, this at last—a quiet intervale,
Kissed by soft lights and gladdened by the sun;
You, of the curling surf, the blast, the gale—
I, of oblivion.

JAMES OPPENHEIM (1882—)

A Handful of Dust

I stooped to the silent earth and lifted a handful of her dust.
Was it a handful of humanity I held?
Was it the crumbled and blown beauty of a woman or a babe?
For over the hills of earth blows the dust of the withered generations;
And not a water-drop in the sea but was once a blood-drop or a tear,
And not an atom of sap in leaf or bud but was once the love-sap in a human being;
And not a lump of soil but was once the rosy curve of lip or breast or cheek.
Handful of dust, you stagger me;
I did not dream the world was so full of the dead,
And the air I breathe so rich with the bewildering past.
Kiss of what girls is on the wind?
Whisper of what lips is in the cup of my hand?
Cry of what deaths is in the break of the wave tossed by the sea?
I am enfolded in an air of rushing wings;
I am engulfed in clouds of love-lives gone.
Who leans yonder? Helen of Greece?
Who walks with me? Isolde?
The trees are shaking down the blossoms from Juliet's breast,
And the bee drinks honey from the lips of David.

Come, girl, my comrade;
Stand close, sun-tanned one, with your bright eyes lifted.
Behold this dust!
This is you: this of the earth under our feet is you.
Raised by what miracle? Shaped by what magic?
Breathed into by what god?

And a hundred years hence one like myself may come,
And stoop, and take a handful of the yielding earth,
And never dream that in his palm
Lies she that laughed and ran and lived beside this sea
On an afternoon a hundred years before.

Listen to the dust in this hand.
Who is trying to speak to us?

The Lonely Child

Do you think, my boy, when I put my arms around you
To still your fears,

That it is I who conquer the dark and the lonely night?
My arms seem to wrap love about you,
As your little heart fluttering at my breast
Throbs love through me. . . .

But, dear one, it is not your father:
Other arms are about you, drawing you near,
And drawing the Earth near, and the Night near,
And your father near. . . .

Some day you shall lie alone at nights,
As now your father lies;
And in those arms, as a leaf fallen on a tranquil stream,
Drift into dreams and healing sleep.

The Runner in the Skies

Who is the runner in the skies
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming heart!
Her feet are on the winds where space is deep;
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover.

BERTON BRALEY (1882—)

To a Photographer

I have known love and hate and work and fight;
I have lived largely, I have dreamed and planned,
And Time, the Sculptor, with a master hand
Has graven on my face for all men's sight
Deep lines of joy and sorrow, growth and blight
Of labor and of service and command
—And now you show me this, this waxen, bland
And placid face, unlined, unwrinkled, white.

This is not I—this fatuous thing you show,
Retouched and smoothed and prettified to please,
Put back the wrinkles and the lines I know;
I have spent blood and tears achieving these,
Out of the pain, the struggle and the wrack
These are my scars of battle—put them back!

ALFRED KREYMBORG (1883—)

Old Manuscript

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom;
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant—
like the earth
or the sea.

HARRY KEMP (1883—)

Prithee, Strive Not

Prithee, strive not to remember
  Ancient love burnt out and dead;
Blow not on the blackened ember,—
  Ash will ne'er again give red.

Lift the latch—another lover
  Waits upon thy kiss without:
All the old things have gone over
  That the heart went mad about.

The Conquerors

I saw the Conquerors riding by
  With trampling feet of horse and men:
Empire on empire like the tide
  Flooded the world and ebbed again;

A thousand banners caught the sun,
  And cities smoked along the plain,
And laden down with silk and gold
  And heaped-up pillage groaned the wain.

I saw the Conquerors riding by,
  Splashing through loathsome floods of war—
The Crescent leaning o'er its hosts,
  And the barbaric scimitar,—

And continents of moving spears,
  And storms of arrows in the sky,
And all the instruments sought out
  By cunning men that men may die!

I saw the Conquerors riding by
  With cruel lips and faces wan:
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned
  There rode the Mongol Genghis Khan;

And Alexander, like a god,
  Who sought to weld the world in one;
And Cæsar with his laurel wreath;
  And like a thing from Hell the Hun;

And leading, like a star the van,
  Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went
  Dreaming of empire, and alone . . .

Then all they perished from the earth
  As fleeting shadows from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
  Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass!

MAX EASTMAN (1883—)

To a Tawny Thrush

Pine spirit!
Breath and voice of a wild glade!
In the wild forest near it,
In the cool hemlock or the leafy limb,
Whereunder
Thou didst run and wander
Thro' the sun and shade,
An elvish echo and a shadow dim,
There in the twilight thou dost lift thy song,
And give the stilly woods a silver tongue.
Out of what liquid is thy laughing made
A sister of the water thou dost seem,
The quivering cataract thou singest near,
Whose glistening stream,
Unto the listening ear,

Thou dost outrun with thy cascade
Of music beautiful and swift and clear—
A joy unto the mournful forest given!
As when afar

A travelling star
Across our midnight races,
A moving gleam that quickly ceases,
Lost in the blue black abyss of heaven,
So doth thy light and silver singing
Start and thrill
The silence round thy piney hill,
Unto the sober hour a jewel bringing—
A mystery—a strain of rhythm fleeing—
A vagrant echo winging
Back to the unuttered theme of being!

At the Aquarium

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As through the agèd deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion!
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro.
They watch with never winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there,
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

MARGUERITE WILKINSON (1883—)

Before Dawn in the Woods

Upon our eyelids, dear, the dew will lie,
And on the roughened meshes of our hair,
While little feet make bold to scurry by
And half-notes shrilly cut the quickened air.

Our clean, hard bodies, on the clean, hard ground
Will vaguely feel that they are full of power,
And they will stir, and stretch, and look around,
Loving the early, chill, half-lighted hour.

Loving the voices in the shadowed trees,
Loving the feet that stir the blossoming grass—
Oh, always we have known such things as these,
And knowing, can we love and let them pass?

FRANCIS HACKETT (1883—)

The Dead Aviator

So endlessly the gray-lipped sea
Kept me within his eye,
And lean he licked his hollow flanks
And followed up the sky.

I was the lark whose song was heard
When I was lost to sight,
I was the golden arrow loosed
To pierce the heart of night.

I fled the little earth, I climbed
Above the rising sun,
I met the morning in a blaze
Before my hour was gone.

I ran beyond the rim of space,
Its veins I flung aside,
Laughter was mine and mine was youth
And all my own was pride.

From end to end I knew the way,
I had no doubt nor fear,
The minutes were a forfeit paid
To fetch the landfall near.

But all at once my heart I held,
My carol frozen died—
A white cloud laid her cheek to mine
And wove me to her side.

Her icy fingers clasped my flesh,
Her hair dropped in my face,
And up we fell and down we rose
And twisted into space.

Laughter was mine, and mine was youth,
I pressed the edge of life,
I kissed the sun and raced the wind,
I found immortal strife.

Out of myself I spent myself,
I lost the mortal share,
My grave is in the ashen plain,
My spirit in the air.

Good-by, sweet pride of man that flew,
Sweet pain of man that bled,
I was the lark that spilled his heart,
The golden arrow sped.

So endlessly the gray-lipped sea
Kept me within his eye,
And lean he licked his hollow flanks
And followed up the sky.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE (1883-—)

To an Old Friend

You have determined all that life should be;
I think it still an infinite mystery:—
Therefore we disagree.

Go, friend, and trouble not our happy past
With memory of the parting here at last
Amid confusions vast.

Go—and remember me as one astray,
If so you will. Aye, if you chose it, pray
For my misguided way.

Perhaps,—who knows?—from deeps I must explore
I shall look back regretful to the shore
Where we two walked before.

Or else, perhaps, across a troubled sea
My reckless sail shall push inflexibly
Till the west swallows me.

Then warnings of my doom your children tell.—
Say that your friend, whose life was launched so well,
Went to eternal hell.

Or will you be more honest?—will you say
That in the closing of a stormy day
Your friend once sailed away—

And that 'mid foam that deafened all replies
He passed beyond the vision of your eyes
To luminous western skies?

From "Sonnets of a Portrait-Painter"

I am in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm,—
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.
You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed,—
The gods are good! The world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls. O take me to your breast!
Take me,—be with me for a moment's span!—
I am in love with all unveiled faces.
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

The Three Sisters

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
Of only two, your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
But one was mine.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK (1884—)

The Candle and the Flame

Thy hands are like cool herbs that bring
Balm to men's hearts, upon them laid;
Thy lovely petalled lips are made
As any blossom of the spring.
But in thine eyes there is a thing,
O Love, that makes me half afraid.

For these are old, old eyes. . . . They gleam
Between the waking and the dream
With antique wisdom, like a bright

Lamp strangled by the temple's veil
That beckons to the acolyte
Who prays with trembling lips and pale
Through the long watches of the night.

They are as old as life. They were
When proud Gomorrah reared its head
A new-born city. They were there
When in the places of the dead
Men swathed the body of the Lord.
They visioned Pa-wak raise the wall
Of China. They saw Carthage fall
And marked the grim Hun lead his horde.

There is no secret anywhere
Nor any joy or shame that lies
Not writ somehow in those child-eyes
Of thine, O Love, in some strange wise.
Thou art the lad Endymion,
And that great queen with spice and myrrh
From Araby, whom Solomon
Delighted, and the lust of her.

The legions marching from the sea
With Cæsar's cohorts sang of thee,
How thy fair head meant more to him
Than all the land of Italy.
Yea, in the old days thou wast she
Who lured Mark Antony from home
To death and Egypt, seeing he
Lost love when he lost Rome.

Thou saw'st old Tubal strike the lyre,
Yea, first for thee the poet hurled
Defiance at the starry choir!
Thou art the romance and the fire,
Thou art the pageance and the strife,
The clamour, mounting high and higher,
From all the lovers in the world
To all the lords of love and life.

. . . . . .

Perhaps the passions of mankind
Are but the torches mystical
Lit by some spirit-hand to find
The dwelling of the Master-mind
That knows the secret of it all,
In the great darkness and the wind.

We are the Candle, Love the Flame,
  Each little life-light flickers out,
Love bides, immortally the same:
When of life's fever we shall tire
He will desert us and the fire
  Rekindle new in prince and lout.

Twin-born of knowledge and of lust,
  He was before us, he shall be
  Indifferent still of thee and me,
When shattered is life's golden cup,
When thy young limbs are shrivelled up,
And when my heart is turned to dust.

Nay, sweet, smile not to know at last
  That thou and I, or knave or fool,
  Are but the involitient tool
Of some world-purpose, vague and vast.
No bar to passion's fury set,
  With monstrous poppies spice the wine,
  For only drunk are we divine,
And only mad shall we forget!

SARA TEASDALE (1884—)

The Flight

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,
Lift me up in your love as a light wind lifts a swallow,
Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain—
But what if I heard my first love calling me again?

Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door—
But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?

Debt

What do I owe to you
  Who loved me deep and long?
You never gave my spirit wings
  Or gave my heart a song.

But oh, to him I loved
  Who loved me not at all,
I owe the little open gate
That led through heaven's wall.

Four Winds

"Four winds blowing through the sky,
You have seen poor maidens die,
Tell me then what I shall do
That my lover may be true."
Said the wind from out the south,
"Lay no kiss upon his mouth,"
And the wind from out the west,
"Wound the heart within his breast,"
And the wind from out the east,
"Send him empty from the feast,"
And the wind from out the north,
"In the tempest thrust him forth;
When thou art more cruel than he,
Then will love be kind to thee."

The Answer

When I go back to earth
And all my joyous body
Puts off the red and white
That once had been so proud,
If men should pass above
With false and feeble pity,
My dust will find a voice
To answer them aloud:

"Be still, I am content,
Take back your poor compassion!—
Joy was a flame in me
Too steady to destroy.
Lithe as a bending reed
Loving the storm that sways her—
I found more joy in sorrow
Than you could find in joy."

CHARLES L. O'DONNELL, C.S.C. (1884—)

Forgiveness

Now God be thanked that roads are long and wide,
And four far havens in the scattered sky:
It would be hard to meet and pass you by.

And God be praised there is an end of pride,
And pity only has a word to say,
While memory grows dim as time grows gray.

For, God His word, I gave my best to you,
All that I had, the finer and the sweet,
To make—a path for your unquiet feet.

Their track is on the life they trampled through;
Such evil steps to leave such hallowing.
Now God be with them in their wandering.

The Poet's Bread

Morn offers him her flasked light
That he may slake his thirst of soul
And for his hungry heart will Night
Her wonder-cloth of stars outroll.

However fortune goes or comes
He has his daily certain bread,
Taking the heaven's starry crumbs,
And with a crust of sunset fed.

EUNICE TIETJENS (1884—)

Completion

My heart has fed today.
My heart, like hind at play,
Has grazed in fields of love, and washed in streams
Of quick, imperishable dreams.

In moth-white beauty shimmering,
Lovely as birches in the moon glimmering,
From coigns of sleep my eyes
Saw dawn and love arise.

And like a bird at rest,
Steady in a swinging nest,
My heart at peace lay gloriously
While wings of ecstasy
Beat round me and above.

I am fulfilled of love.

Parting after a Quarrel

You looked at me with eyes grown bright with pain
Like some trapped thing's. And then you moved your head
Slowly from side to side, as though the strain
Ached in your throat with anger and with dread.

And then you turned and left me, and I stood
With a queer sense of deadness over me,
And only wondered dully that you could
Fasten your trench-coat up so carefully

Till you were gone. Then all the air was thick
With my last words that seemed to leap and quiver.
And in my heart I heard the little click
Of a door that closes—quietly, forever.

EZRA POUND (1885—)

Δ'ΩΙΑΡ

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of grey waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
The shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember Thee.

Ortus

How have I labored?
How have I not labored
To bring her soul to birth,
To give these elements a name and a centre!

She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.
She has no name, and no place.
How have I labored to bring her soul into separation;
To give her a name and her being!
Surely you are bound and entwined,
You are mingled with the elements unborn;
I have loved a stream and a shadow.

I beseech you enter your life.
I beseech you learn to say "I"
When I question you:
For you are no part, but a whole;
No portion, but a being.

Piccadilly

Beautiful, tragical faces—
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;

And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

The crass, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do;
But oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgotten you?

Ballad of the Goodly Fere

Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion.

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see.
"First let these go!" quo' our goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh, we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company.
No capon priest was the goodly Fere,
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free.
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book, I think,
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he.
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the goodly Fere
That bade his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free.
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue,
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee.
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the gray o' the sea.

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging,
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Geneseret
Wi' tweg words spoke suddenly.

A master of men was the goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea.
If they think they ha' slain our goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER (1885—)

Landscapes

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
Made every little blade of grass appear
Vivid and startling—everything was there
With sharpened outlines, eloquently clear,
As though one saw it in a crystal sphere.
The rusty sumac with its struggling spires;
The golden-rod with all its million fires;
(A million torches swinging in the wind)

A single poplar, marvellously thinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword;
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord;
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces,
Little old ladies cackling over laces;
The quaint, unhurried road that curved so well;
The prim petunias with their rich, rank smell;
The lettuce-birds, the creepers in the field—
How bountifully were they all revealed!
How arrogantly each one seemed to thrive—
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive!

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a sharp and kindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed;
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .
Oh, what a liberal power that made them thrive
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.

And now I saw the slender willow-tree
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall
As though it danced in some sad ritual;
But rather like a young, athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl,
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made a sober tree seem such a rover—
Or made the staid and stalwart apple-trees,
That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace,
Turn all their fruit to little worlds of flame,
And burn the trembling orchard there below.
What lit the heart of every golden-glow—
Oh, why was nothing weary, dull or tame?
Beauty it was, and keen, compassionate mirth
That drives the vast and energetic earth.

And, with abrupt and visionary eyes,
I saw the huddled tenements arise.
Here where the merry clover danced and shone
Sprang agonies of iron and of stone;
There, where green Silence laughed or stood enthralled,
Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled.
The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills;

Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
The menace of these things swept over me;
A threatening, unconquerable sea. . . .

A stirring landscape and a generous earth!
Freshening courage and benevolent mirth—
And then the city, like a hideous sore. . . .
Good God, and what is all this beauty for?

Caliban in the Coal Mines

God, we don't like to complain,
  We know that the mine is no lark—
But—there's the pools from the rain;
  But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, you don't know what it is—
  You, in Your well-lighted sky,
Watching the meteors whiz;
  Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
  Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
  Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above,
  And nothing that moves but the cars—
God, if You wish for our love,
  Fling us a handful of stars!

SEAMUS O'SHEEL (1886—)

"They Went Forth to Battle but They Always Fell"

They went forth to battle but they always fell;
  Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
  They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
  They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
  A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
  Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
  On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.

Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle but they always fell:
Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER (1886—)

Sinfonia Domestica

When the white wave of a glory that is hardly I
Breaks through my mind and washes it clean,
I know at last the meaning of my ecstasy,
And know at last my wish and what it can mean.

To have sped out of life that night—to have vanished
Not as a vision, but as something touched, yet grown
Radiant as the moonlight, circling my naked shoulder;
Wrapped in a dream of beauty, longed for, but never known.

For how with our daily converse, even the sweet sharing
Of thoughts, of food, of home, of common life,
How shall I be that glory, that last desire
For which men struggle? Is Romance in a wife?

Must I bend a heart that is bowed to breaking
With a frustration, inevitable and slow,
And bank my flame to a low hearth fire, believing
You'll come for warmth and life to its tempered glow?

Shall I mould my hope anew, to one of service,
And tell my uneasy soul "Behold, this is good."
And meet you (if we do meet), even at Heaven's threshold,
With ewer and basin, with clothing and with food?

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT (1886—)

The Falconer of God

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—

A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
Rising and crying
Wordless, wondrous things;
The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings
The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so."

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
I heard the mournful loon
In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then, with feathery thunder, the bird of my desire
Broke from the cover
Flashing silver fire.
High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gript and held him fast.

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled,—
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. O bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find!

ZOË AKINS (1886—)

This Is My Hour

In rain and twilight mist the city street,
Hushed and half-hidden, might this instant be
A dark canal beneath our balcony,
Like one in Venice, Sweet.

The street-lights blossom, star-wise, one by one;
A lofty tower the shadows have not hid
Stands out—part column and part pyramid—
Holy to look upon.

The dusk grows deeper, and on silver wings
The twilight flutters like a weary gull
Toward some sea-island, lost and beautiful
Where a sea-syren sings.

"This is my hour," you breathe with quiet lips;
And filled with beauty, dreaming and devout,
We sit in silence, while our thoughts go out—
Like treasure-seeking ships.

One Woman

Since I heard them speak of her great shame
I looked upon her face with curious eyes,
But pity in my heart became surprise,—
Finding not any havoc there, nor flame;
Only a little smile that went and came,
As if she knew a mirth too great and wise
And far too proud to serve the world with lies,
Disdaining as she did its praise or blame.

She who had passed through sin, as through a door,
Stayed not upon the steps to wail and beat
Against a portal closed for evermore;
But smiled, and went her way with tireless feet,
When night had passed and the long day begun;—
So Hagar faced the desert with her son.

The Wanderer

The ships are lying in the bay,
The gulls are swinging round their spars;
My soul as eagerly as they
Desires the margin of the stars.

So much do I love wandering,
So much I love the sea and sky,
That it will be a piteous thing
In one small grave to lie.

"H. D." (pseud. of Hilda Doolittle, Mrs. Richard Aldington) (1886—)

Priapus

KEEPER OF THE ORCHARDS

I saw the first pear
As it fell.
The honey-seeking golden-branded,
The yellow swarm
Was not more fleet than I,
(Spare us from loveliness!)
And I fell prostrate,
Crying,
"Thou hast flayed us with thy blossoms;
Spare us the beauty
Of fruit-trees!"
The honey-seeking
Paused not,
The air thundered with their song,
And I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
God of the orchard,
I bring thee an offering:
Do you, alone unbeautiful
(Son of the god),
Spare us from loveliness.
The fallen hazel-nuts,
Stripped late of their green sheaths,
The grapes, red-purple,
Their berries
Dripping with wine,
Pomegranates already broken,
And shrunken figs,
And quinces untouched,
I bring thee as offering.

JOYCE KILMER (1886-1918)

Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Ballade of My Lady's Beauty

Squire Adam had two wives, they say,
  Two wives had he, for his delight,
He kissed and clypt them all the day
  And clypt and kissed them all the night.
  Now Eve like ocean foam was white
And Lilith roses dipped in wine,
  But though they were a goodly sight
No lady is so fair as mine.

To Venus some folk tribute pay
  And Queen of Beauty she is hight,
And Sainte Marie the world doth sway
  In cerule napery bedight.
  My wonderment these twain invite,
Their comeliness it is divine,
  And yet I say in their despite,
No lady is so fair as mine.

Dame Helen caused a grievous fray,
  For love of her brave men did fight,
The eyes of her made sages fey
  And put their hearts in woful plight.
  To her no rhymes will I indite,
For her no garlands will I twine,
  Though she be made of flowers and light
No lady is so fair as mine.

L'Envoi

Prince Eros, Lord of lovely might
  Who on Olympus dost recline,
Do I not tell the truth aright?
  No lady is so fair as mine.

Old Poets

(For Robert Cortes Holliday)

If I should live in a forest
  And sleep underneath a tree,
No grove of impudent saplings
  Would make a home for me.

I'd go where the old oaks gather,
  Serene and good and strong,
And they would not sigh and tremble
  And vex me with a song.

The pleasantest sort of poet
  Is the poet who's old and wise,
With an old white beard and wrinkles
  About his kind old eyes.

For these young flippertigibbets
  A-rhyming their hours away,
They won't be still like honest men
  And listen to what you say.

The young poet screams forever
  About his sex and soul;
But the old man listens, and smokes his pipe,
  And polishes its bowl.

There should be a club for poets
  Who have come to seventy year.
They should sit in a great hall drinking
  Red wine and golden beer.

They would shuffle in of an evening,
  Each one to his cushioned seat,
And there would be mellow talking
  And silence rich and sweet.

There is no peace to be taken
  With poets who are young,
For they worry about the wars to be fought
  And the songs that must be sung.

But the old man knows that he's in his chair
  And that God's on His throne in the sky.
So he sits by the fire in comfort
  And he lets the world spin by.

Wealth

(For Aline)

From what old ballad, or from what rich frame
  Did you descend to glorify the earth?
Was it from Chaucer's singing book you came?
  Or did Watteau's small brushes give you birth?

Nothing so exquisite as that slight hand
  Could Raphael or Leonardo trace.
Nor could the poets know in Fairyland
  The changing wonder of your lyric face.

I would possess a host of lovely things,
  But I am poor and such joys may not be.
So God who lifts the poor and humbles kings
  Sent loveliness itself to dwell with me.

Dave Lilly

There's a brook on the side of Greylock that used to be full of trout,
But there's nothing there now but minnows; they say it is all fished out.
I fished there many a Summer day some twenty years ago,
And I never quit without getting a mess of a dozen or so.

There was a man, Dave Lilly, who lived on the North Adams road,
And he spent all his time fishing, while his neighbors reaped and sowed.
He was the luckiest fisherman in the Berkshire hills, I think.
And when he didn't go fishing he'd sit in the tavern and drink.

Well, Dave is dead and buried, and nobody cares very much;
They have no use in Greylock for drunkards and loafers and such.
But I always liked Dave Lilly, he was pleasant as you could wish;
He was shiftless and good-for-nothing, but he certainly could fish.

The other night I was walking up the hill from Williamstown
And I came to the brook I mentioned, and I stopped on the bridge and sat down.

I looked at the blackened water with its little flecks of white
And I heard it ripple and whisper in the still of the Summer night.

And after I'd been there a minute it seemed to me I could feel
The presence of someone near me, and I heard the hum of a reel.
And the water was churned and broken, and something was brought to land
By a twist and flirt of a shadowy rod in a deft and shadowy hand.

I scrambled down to the brookside and hunted all about;
There wasn't a sign of a fisherman; there wasn't a sign of a trout.
But I heard somebody chuckle behind the hollow oak
And I got a whiff of tobacco like Lilly used to smoke.

It's fifteen years, they tell me, since anyone fished that brook;
And there's nothing in it but minnows that nibble the bait off your hook.
But before the sun has risen and after the moon has set
I know that it's full of ghostly trout for Lilly's ghost to get.

I guess I'll go to the tavern and get a bottle of rye
And leave it down by the hollow oak, where Lilly's ghost went by.
I meant to go up on the hillside and try to find his grave
And put some flowers on it—but this will be better for Dave.

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK (1886—)

Pitiless Beauty

Beauty will not let me rest
  Either night nor day,
Like a voice within my breast
  Calling me away.

When the morning, sad and vast,
  Rises through the stars,
I am summoned forth again
  To the endless wars;

Evening, with her myriad eyes,
  Will not let me sleep,
Sick for Beauty on my bed
  The long hours creep.

O Beauty, cruel and stupendous!
Hounded, out of breath,
I fly you through the gloom tremendous
Down the slopes of Death.

From "The Divine Fantasy"

All afternoon the passion of heaven spent
On earth its fiery fury in blind, bright
Lightnings of dread and laughters of delight
Down shuddering deeps of shaken thunder, where
The delirious longing loosed its sorrowing hair
Of wind and shower and overshadowing cloud
Across the belovèd face, in darkness bowed
Or glimmering light revealed; and cried aloud
For anger of utter ecstasy; and shed
The wild love of the rushing rain that sped
To the thrilled heart, consenting, of the dim
And rapturous earth, that lifted up to him
Drowsed lips of thirsty flowers; and the cup
Of every flower for joy was lifted up,
And drank, and swayed! So, wearied out at length,
Flagged the bright pulses, and the ebbing strength,
With muttering of remembered thunders, passed
Down the large shores of evening; till at last
The exhausted heaven of twilight from afar
Shone washed of all her sorrows; and a star
Brooded above the fading storm, and saw
The winnowed reaches deepening into awe
Of gradual darkness, and the fields that lay
All drenched and wearied out at dusk of day
And the worn end of things; while far away
The receding fury moaned.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER (1886—)

Vision

You who flutter and quiver
An instant
Just beyond my apprehension;
Lady,
I will find the white orchid for you,
If you will but give me
One smile between those wayward drifts of hair.

I will break the wild berries that loop themselves over the
marsh-pool,
For your sake,

And the long green canes that swish against each other,
I will break, to set in your hands.
For there is no wonder like to you,
You who flutter and quiver
An instant
Just beyond my apprehension.

From "Irradiations"

As I wandered over the city through the night,
I saw many strange things:
But I have forgotten all
Except one painted face.
Gaudy, shameless night-orchid,
Heavy, flushed, sticky with narcotic perfume,
There was something in you which made me prefer you
Above all the feeble forget-me-nots of the world.
You were neither burnt out nor pallid,
There was plain, coarse, vulgar meaning in every line of you,
And no make-believe:
You were at least alive,
When all the rest were but puppets of the night.

VINCENT STARRETT (1886—)

Villon Strolls at Midnight

"There is an eerie music, Tabary,
In the malevolence of the wind to-night.
Think you the spirits of the damned make flight
O' midnights? Gad, a wench I used to see
Heard all the ghosts of history ride past
Her window on a shrieking gale like this. . . .
Look! Where the moonlight and the shadows kiss!
Saw you aught move? . . . Poor jade, she died unmassed.

"See where the gibbet riseth, gaunt and slim. . . .
(Curse me! The wind hath thrust my entrails through.)
It beareth fruit to-night. . . . Not me, nor you! . . .
Hark to the clatter of the bones of him.
They rattle like . . . Ah, do you catch your breath? . . .
Like castanets, clapped in the hands of Death!"

Dancer

Talcumed into a ghost, she slowly sways
To the wild music of an Eastern dance,
Weaving from light to shadow; and her glance
Holds the blue innocence of sweet amaze.

This is a lissome thing that bends its gaze
Into my gilded box . . . and is it chance
That I am in the line of her advance?
'Tis a seductive theme the viol plays!

Something of fury hurries through my veins. . . .
If she would only cover up her knees!
Is there none here to stop those panic strains?
Fiddles of madness . . . flagrant ecstasies . . .
Let the earth crumble! Slay the Pope of Rome!
Unsheathe your eyes again, Girl. Drive them home!

ORRICK JOHNS (1887—)

Wild Plum

They are unholy who are born
To love wild plum at night,
Who once have passed it on a road,
Glimmering and white.

It is as though the darkness had
Speech of silver words,
Or as though a cloud of stars
Perched like ghostly birds.

They are unpitied from their birth
And homeless in men's sight,
Who love better than the earth,
Wild plum at night.

Dilemma

What though the moon should come
With a blinding glow,
And the stars have a game
On the wood's edge . . .
A man would have to still
Cut and weed and sow,
And lay a white line
When he plants a hedge.

What though God
With a great sound of rain
Came to talk of violets
And things people do . . .
I would have to labour
And dig with my brain
Still to get a truth
Out of all words new.

ALAN SEEGER (1888-1916)

"I Have a Rendezvous with Death"

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear. . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT (1888—)

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse el mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s' i'odo il vero
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go, then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go,
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go,
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room,
  So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are bracketed and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
  And should I then presume?
  And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball,
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
  Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
  That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail
    along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a
    screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
  "That is not it at all,
  That is not what I meant, at all."

. . . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am not attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

ALINE KILMER (1888—)

Sanctuary

God has builded a house with a low lintel
And in it He has put all manner of things.
Follow the clue through the mazes that lead to His door:
Look in, look in! see what is there for our finding.
Peace is there like a pearl, and rest and the end of seeking.
Light is there and refreshment and quiet joy.
There we shall find for our use wide beautiful wings,
Ecstasy, solitude, space: or for those who have been too lonely
The love of friends, the warmth of a homely fire.
O never grieve again for the piteous ending
Of loveliness that could not be made to last.
There all bright passing beauty is held forever,
Free from the sense of tears, to be loved without regret.
There we shall find at their source music and love and laughter,
Color and subtle fragrance and soft incredible textures.
Be sure we shall find what our weary hearts desire:
If we are tired of light there shall be velvet darkness
Falling across long fields, with stars, and a low voice calling,
Calling at last the word we thought would never be spoken.
But we, being hard and foolish and proud and mortal,
Are slow to bend and enter that humble portal.

One Shall Be Taken and the Other Left

There is no Rachel any more
And so it does not really matter.
Leah alone is left, and she
Goes her own way inscrutably.

Soft-eyed she goes, content to scatter
Fine sand along a barren shore
Where there was sand enough before:
Or from a well that has no water

Raising a futile pitcher up,
Lifts to her lips an empty cup.
Now she is Laban's only daughter:
There is no Rachel any more.

To Sappho, About Her Apple

The highest apple swinging in the treetop
Fell in my two hands, eagerly uplifted.

For though I knew its height was half its fairness,
Still I would have it.

Now I am wise with centuries of wisdom.
I lift my voice to give your ashes comfort:
Sappho, the tempting fruit that hung above you
Was hard and bitter.

"The Heart Knoweth Its Own Bitterness"

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed
Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart;
For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
That answers to every wind.
I am sick of the thing! I think we had better part.

My heart will come to any piper's calling,
A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
Say that my heart has sinned.
You would have my heart? You may. I am sick of the thing.

Light Lover

Why don't you go back to the sea, my dear?
I am not one who would hold you;
The sea is the woman you really love,
So let hers be the arms that fold you.
Your bright blue eyes are a sailor's eyes,
Your hungry heart is a sailor's too.
And I know each port that you pass through
Will give one lass both bonny and wise
Who has learned light love from a sailor's eyes.
If you ever go back to the sea, my dear,
I shall miss you—yes, can you doubt it?
But women have lived through worse than that,
So why should we worry about it?
Take your restless heart to the restless sea,
Your light, light love to a lighter lass,
Who will smile when you come and smile when you pass.
Here you can only trouble me.
Oh, I think you had better go back to sea!

LEW SARETT (1888—)

Leave Me to My Own

Oh, leave me to my own;
Unglorified—perchance unknown,
One of a nameless band

Of gipsy cloud and silent butte and fir.
Oh, let me stand
Against the whipping wind, in the lavender
Of dusk, like a mighty limber-pine
At timber-line—
Unyielding, stiff,
Unbent of head
Among the ageless dead—
One with the mountain's cliff
And the imperturbable stone.
And when the winter gales intone
Among my boughs a dread
And melancholy sweep
Of song, and some mysterious hand
Brushes my heart
In a mournful melody, weep
No tear for me, nor moan—
Pray, stand apart
From me, and leave me to my own;
For in the high blue valleys of this land,
When the afterglow
Lingers among the glaciers, I shall know
Again the calm
Of dusk, the dewy balm
Of sleep, release
From pain—and utter peace.

Oh, leave me to the wild companionship
Of firs that toss
In the windy night and drip
Their wild wet rains upon the moss;
To the columbine
That strives to slip
Shyly among my roots and tip
Its sparkling wine
Upon my grassy shrine;
To the brotherhood
Of bending skies bestrown
With stars above the soundless solitude—
Of waterfalls that fling upon the night
A stony broken music from their height—
Oh, leave me to my own.

CONRAD AIKEN (1889—)

Music I Heard

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread.

Now I am without you, all is desolate,
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, beloved:
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes.
And in my heart, they will remember always:
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise!

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY (1890—)

To a Post-Office Inkwell

How many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
How shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!
Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN (1890—)

To Claire

I

You are too fair to get for nothing;—
I pay, and still am in arrears;
Gold could not buy you—no, nor glory:
Only tears.

The heart must break before your altar
After the doves and fruit are laid—
You, the shrine of whose love and beauty
Stands in shade.

The wreath in your hair was bought with my sorrow;
'Twas I that paid for it, leaf by leaf;—
Youth could not buy you—no, nor dreaming:
Only grief.

II

You called them not by name, nor saw the way,
But heard the dim persuasion of your soul,
And followed love and beauty all your day,
And reached in darkness many an easy goal,
And spent your heart upon them. Then the years
Brought grief and wisdom and a clearer sight:

You gathered up your residue of tears,
And saw, at last, the summit in the light,
And climbed, and found your place. But there is one,
Who, for your seeking, shall not rest again;
Who shall restore an unremembered sun,
And follow your lost footsteps in his brain,
And find this strange companion on his quest:
Love, with eternal Sorrow at her breast.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892—)

Afternoon on a Hill

I will be the gladdest thing
  Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
  And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
  With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass
  And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
  Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
  And then start down!

Elaine

Oh, come again to Astolat!
  I will not ask you to be kind.
And you may go when you will go,
  And I will stay behind.

I will not say how dear you are,
  Or ask you if you hold me dear,

Or trouble you with things for you
The way I did last year.

So still the orchard, Lancelot,
So very still the lake shall be,
You could not guess—though you should guess—
What is become of me.

So wide shall be the garden walk,
The garden seat so very wide,
You needs must think—if you should think—
The lily maid had died.

Save that, a little way away,
I'd watch you for a little while,
To see you speak, the way you speak,
And smile,—if you should smile.

Lament

Listen, children:
Your father is dead.
From his old coats
I'll make you little jackets;
I'll make you little trousers
From his old pants.
There'll be in his pockets
Things he used to put there,
Keys and pennies
Covered with tobacco;
Dan shall have the pennies
To save in his bank;
Anne shall have the keys
To make a pretty noise with.
Life must go on,
And the dead be forgotten;
Life must go on,
Tho good men die;
Anne, eat your breakfast;
Dan, take your medicine;
Life must go on;
I forget just why.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM (1892—)

The Old Jew

No fawn-tinged hospital pajamas could cheat him of his
Austerity,

Which tamed even the doctors with its pure fire.
They examined him; made him bow to them:
Massive altars were they, at whose swollen feet grovelled a worshipper.
Then they laughed, half in scorn of him; and then there came a miracle.
The little man was above them in a bound.
His austerity, like an irresistible sledge-hammer, drove them lower and lower.
They dwindled while he soared.

Advice to a Buttercup

Undistinguished buttercup,
Lost among myriads of others,
To the red ant eyeing you
You are giant stillness.
He pauses on the boulder of a clod,
Baffled by your nearness to the sky,
But to the black loam at your feet
You are the atom of a pent-up dream.
Undistinguished buttercup,
Take your little breath of contemplation,
Undisturbed by haughty tricks of space.

To a Friend

Your head is steel cut into drooping lines
That make a mask satirically meek:
Your face is like a tired devil weak
From drinking many valued and unsought wines.
The sullen skepticism of your eyes
Forever trying to transcend itself,
Is often entered by a wistful elf
Who sits naively unperturbed and wise.

And this same remnant, with its youthful wiles
Held curiously apart from blasphemies,
Twirls starlight shivers out upon your sneers
And changes them to little, startled smiles.
And all your insolence drops to its knees
Before the half-won grandeur of past years.

JULIA COOLEY (1893—)

Vide Astra

Say not so briefly that the stars to-night
Are fair, as if to name them flocks of light,

Those hosted stars that all unheeded ride,
Unloved, unsought and unidentified.
Though they be severed similarities,
Say not they glint with sameness through the trees
And flash alike before your sightless eyes.
Say rather that you see blue Vega rise
To cap the topmost wave of heaven with fire,
Where flies, bright with her sapphire song, the Lyre!
Say that Arcturus gleams with torrid red,
And casts the image of his burning head,
His giant, million-sunned intensity
Into our minimizing earthly sea,
As one red spark upon the smitten wave!
Say that the Crown, whose perfectness you crave,
That mystic, radiant, half-unfinished Crown,
Whose candles the deep seas of Heaven cannot drown,
Shines like a nightly promise to your soul.
Say that over the horizon's bowl
Most lightly twinkles Bernice's hair,
In ecstasy of beauty,—maddening-fair.
Say that the Lynx glows watchfully and near,
With burnished eyes, striking your heart with fear.
Then turn, and fear no more! The White Swan brings
Tranquillity, flying with peaceful wings,
Serenely, with the starred world, to the west.
Say that bright Scorpius flashes without rest
In the warm South, while scorched Antares burns
Upon its heart, and near skies, as it turns,
Are bubbling with the heat! Say that you see
Great Pegasus plunge upward recklessly,
From the abandoned East, and that near by
Andromeda stands tall in the mid-sky,
While Perseus arches guarding at her side.
Then look once more, while the deep heavens glide.
The North holds clusters other than the Bear,
For there flames Cassiopeia in her floating chair.

Say not, in loveless haste, the stars to-night
Are fair. Blind joying! Know each leaping light!
Behold each star, embarked in sundered flight.
Name every flame! Rejoice the soul of sight!

MAURICE A. HANLINE (1895—)

A Song of Pierrot

The cloak of laughter I have worn
  Has only served to hide the smart.
The bells and bladder I have born
  Could make no echo in my heart.

And all the places where I go
  Are sweet with memories of you yet.
The laughing footsteps of Pierrot
  Are always searching for Pierrette.

Upon my face a painted smile,
  Upon my lips a scarlet stain,
Before my feet an endless mile
  That I must dance despite the pain.
Along the road red poppies grow.
  Perhaps your scarlet lips have set
Upon their petals for Pierrot
  A tithe of kisses, dear Pierrette.

The lips I knew have left their scars,
  Each rose beneath had hid a thorn.
Your love was lost beneath the stars.
  I could not wait until the morn.
The night was lonely, love, and so
  I sought the roses to forget,
But they have withered and Pierrot
  Longs for the kisses of Pierrette.

If in your place you hear my song,
  Hear too, beneath, the strain of tears.
I dance before the grinning throng
  Their mocking laughter fills my ears.
My giddy steps are all they know,
  They do not see my eyes are wet.
I am a tired, lost Pierrot.
  Where are you hiding, my Pierrette?

L'Envoi

Ah, princess, I shall never know.
  You smile and smile and say, "Forget."
The tears and laughter of Pierrot
  Are but the playthings of Pierrette.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

Cloistered

To-night the little nun-girl died.
  Her hands were laid
Across her breast; the last sun tried
  To kiss her quiet braid;
And where the little river cried,
  Her grave was made.

The little nun-girl's soul, in awe,
  Went silently
To where her brother Christ she saw
  Under the Living Tree;
He sighed, and his face seemed to draw
  Her tears, to see.
He laid his hands on her hands mild,
  And gravely blessed;

"Blind, they that kept you so," he smiled,
  With tears unguessed.
"Saw they not Mary held a child
  Upon her breast?"

The Day Before April

The day before April
  Alone, alone,
I walked in the woods
  And I sat on a stone.

I sat on a broad stone
  And sang to the birds.
The tune was God's making
  But I made the words.

ELINOR WYLIE

Peregrine

Liar and bragger,
  He had no friend,
Except a dagger
  And a candle-end;
The one he read by;
The one scared cravens;
And he was fed by
  The Prophet's ravens.
Such haughty creatures
  Avoid the human;
They fondle nature's
  Breast, not woman—
A she-wolf's puppies—
  A wild-cat's pussy-fur:
Their stirrup-cup is
  The pride of Lucifer.
A stick he carried,
  Slept in a lean-to;

He'd never married,
  And he didn't mean to.
He'd tried religion
  And found it pleasant;
He relished a pigeon
  Stewed with a pheasant
In an iron kettle;
  He built stone ovens.
He'd never settle
  In any province.
He made pantries
  Of Vaux and Arden
And the village gentry's
  Kitchen-garden.
Fruits within yards
  Were his staples;
He drank whole vineyards
  From Rome to Naples,
Then went to Brittany
  For the cider.
He could sit any
  Horse, a rider
Outstripping Cheiron's
  Canter and gallop.
Pau's environs,
  The pubs of Salop,
Wells and Bath inns
  Shared his pleasure
With taverns of Athens;
  The Sultan's treasure
He'd seen in Turkey;
  He'd known London
Bright and murky.
  His bones were sunned on
Paris benches
  Beset by sparrows;
Roman trenches,
  Cave-men's barrows,
He liked impartial;
  He liked an Abbey.
His step was martial;
  Spent and shabby
He wasn't broken;
  A dozen lingoes
He must have spoken.
  As a king goes
He went, not minding
  That he lived seeking
And never finding.

He'd visit Peking
And then be gone soon
To the far Canaries;
He'd cross a monsoon
To chase vagaries.
He loved a city
And a street's alarums;
Parks were pretty
And so were bar-rooms.
He loved fiddles;
He talked with rustics;
Life was riddles
And queer acrostics.
His sins were serried,
His virtues garish;
His corpse was buried
In a country parish.
Before he went hence—
God knows where—
He spoke this sentence
With a princely air:
"The noose draws tighter;
This is the end;
I'm a good fighter,
But a bad friend:
I've played the traitor
Over and over;
I'm a good hater,
But a bad lover."

Let No Charitable Hope

Now let no charitable hope
Confuse my mind with images
Of eagle and of antelope:
I am in nature none of these.

ADA FOSTER MURRAY

Her Dwelling Place

Amid the fairest things that grow
My lady hath her dwelling place;
Where runnels flow, and frail buds blow
As shy and pallid as her face.

The wild, bright creatures of the wood
About her fearless flit and spring;

To light her dusky solitude
  Comes April's earliest offering.

The calm Night from her urn of rest
  Pours downward an unbroken stream;
All day upon her mother's breast
  My lady lieth in a dream.

Love could not chill her low, soft bed
  With any sad memorial stone;
He put a red rose at her head—
  A flame as fragrant as his own.

The Shadowed Star

The rosy lamp, the leaping flame,
The friendly pauses in the game—
  I had not felt your breath for years,

Nor heard in dreams the sweet old name;
Why was it, dearest, that you came
  To thrill my heart with sudden tears?

Through whirling systems, alien, vast,
My flesh and soul, it seems, have passed,
  And you have circled far, so far;

What harmony of interchange
Has brought my planet in your range,
  What shadow trembles through your star?

The One Who Stayed

I met a woman old and grey
And sought to cheer her lonely way.

A girl flashed by us, all aglow;
"Your child?" I said; she answered, "No,

"I have but one, and she is dead;
Yet seven others live," she said;

"Live, but we live so far apart
I hold them only in my heart;

"But one who has no dwelling-place
In earthly time or earthly space,

"She nestles in my arms at night,
She greets me when the morn is bright;

"Her winsome smile, her baby ways
Make glad my bleak November days."

She looked across the waters grey,
Then pressed my hand and turned away.

When You Came

There were blossoms all unblown,
They had known the rain so much;
There were angels in the stone
Waiting for the master's touch;
Sweetest songs were still unsung,
Tenderest chords were left unstrung,
When you came.

Summer sinks beneath the snow,
Pale grows every morning's glow;
Yet the wonder does not die
Of the dawn that flushed the sky
When you came.

MORRIS ABEL BEER

Old Garrets

Whenever I see old garrets I think of mice and cheese,
And slender, wistful poets who dream by candle-light,
I think of winds that shiver and wailing leafless trees,
And winding, wooden stairways that creak in hush of night.
I see dim, wrinkled parchments, a dusty quill or two,
A narrow, paneless window that frames a sparkling sky,
Stained walls and broken ceilings the rain has eaten through,
A dried-up china ink-pot,—a shelf with books piled high.
Within those dingy garrets in yellow candle-glow,
What fadeless visions blossomed, what deathless dreams had birth,
What flaming songs leapt starward from poets' roofs below,
When city streets lay sleeping and night had stilled the earth!
Now a house that is rich and modern is a pleasant dwelling place,

But a poet should live in a garret where the witching
moonlight streams,
Alone with the whispering stars and apart from the world's
mad race,
Reigning in indolent ease, a king in his palace of dreams!

The Puddle

The lady with the broom beheld dismayed
A puddle that the rain had left behind;
"More work for me, to clean the pavement now,—
But little rest I find."

And so with weariness she plied her broom,—
The ugly pool soon vanished with the day;
But the poet from his window watched her sweep
The evening star away!

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

From "The Cycle's Rim"

Deep lies thy body, jewel of the sea,
Locked down with wave on wave. Pearl-drift among
The coral towers, and yet not thee, not thee!
So lightly didst thou mount, blue rung o'er rung,
The lustered ladder rippling from that land
Of strangely boughed and wooing wilderness.
Province of dream unwaning, dream yet banned
From sleepers in the sun; but thou, as presses
The lark that feels his song, sped to thy sky.
O unrepressed! If thou wouldst choose be gone,
What sea-charm then could stay thee, bid thee lie
Too deep for cock-crow earth or heaven's dawn?
Yet must I chant these broken, mortal staves,
And lay my leaf of laurel on the waves.

. . . .

My prayers are thee! But, Dear, what means this thing?
That we do walk together as a wind,
Heedless of garden gates where sigh and cling
The little roses that once sought to bind
Our hearts to time; making no pause beside
Blue, curling waters where our thoughts like doves
Drifted to wild-leaf nest; smiling where cried
The tragic marshes with strange shadow loves
That bound us from the sun. The maples burn
Their April wicks of passion; willows yet

Light their slim candles at the dawn's fire-urn;
But here is glow that no Spring ever lit;
Nor hills of vision where we fainting fell
May hold us now, so pale their miracle.

. . . .

No longer backward, treading a lost dream,
But where the Future lifts her morning stole;
Past nations that embracing know one name,
Past faces like the flowers of one soul,
God's soul, humanity. Bells never choired
From time's old sweetness with the sweet of these
Making clear song of all that dim aspired
In our old struggles, barren ecstasies,
Tears and despairs. O lordliest Love, that keepst
Eternal pact with Life, naught can discrown
Thee of one bud of flame howe'er thou weepst;
For though these bodies dear are beaten down,
As ocean triumphs by her broken waves,
Thy tidal breath breaks warm above thy graves.

. . . .

Beloved, if I keep my spirit fed,
Hear not the rustling world, forget her bays,
Naught caring if I go unlaurelled
In eyes of fortune, so I fill my days
With thoughts that bud and bloom for heavenly wear,
Sending my soul to seek thy country out,
Spending still hours in wondering of thee there,
And making vision sweet of every doubt,
Wilt thou not come some perfect eve to touch,
As might a god, with visitant fair feet,
The meadows where I wait, nor scorn too much
The habits of my earth, but even let
Thy hand be first upon a daisy nigh,
And stand with me to watch the swallows fly?

EDWIN JUSTUS MAYER (1896—)

The Poet Dreams of the Wings of Death

O Sea of Dust, I stand upon your shore,
And hear the heavy waves forevermore
Reverberate, and cast their dark foam up
Into the sky, and soil that golden cup;
I stand upon your shore, and think and ponder
Till Desolation takes the part of Wonder,

Seeing how sad the life we lead must be,
O sad, prevailing and omnipotent Sea!
Dust in our mouths through all eternity.

But I have wings, you shall not hold me down;
But I have wings, you shall not make me drown;
But I have wings, and I shall fly from you!
Even now I leave you, and I climb the blue
And brightening skies, as angels might have done
In the far times before the moon and sun;
And mounted ever higher, ever higher,
Lighting the blossoms in the lanes of morn
And paths of night, until they reached their bourne,
And smiled, and rested; and laid aside their fire;
Their impulse and their genius; but retained
The sweetness of them, as when day has rained
And thundered, birds that sang through all, fall still,
Hearing the rainbow music sounding above the hill.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT (1898—)

From "Death-Chant of the Centaurs"

Close his eyes with the coins; bind his chin with the shroud;
Carry this clay along, in the time of the westing cloud;
Lay you the cakes beside, for the three-mouthed dog of Hell;
Slain on the grass in fight, surely his end is well.
Love was the wind he sought, ignorant when it went;
Now he has clasped it close, silent and eloquent;
Slow as the stream and strong, answering knee to knee,
Carry this clay along—it is more wise than we.

JESSIE RITTENHOUSE

Debt

My debt to you, Belovèd,
  Is one I cannot pay
In any coin of any realm
  On any reckoning day;

For where is he shall figure
  The debt, when all is said,
To one who makes you dream again
  When all the dreams are dead?

Or where is the appraiser
  Who shall the claim compute
Of one who makes you sing again
  When all the songs were mute?

The Radiant Loss

Oh, I have lived to be so glad
  You failed me long ago,
So glad you cast away the love
  That I had lavished so,
So glad that you were dull and blind,
  So glad you did not know!

For in a way I had not dreamed
  I built my life anew,
And all the structure of my days
  Into a wonder grew;
And, oh, you left me free to love
  A greater one than you.

LOLA RIDGE

From "The Ghetto"

Lights go out
And the stark trunks of the factories
Melt into the drawn darkness,
Sheathing like a seamless garment.
And mothers take home their babies,
Waxen and delicately curled,
Like little potted flowers closed under the stars. . . .

Lights go out . . .
And colors rush together,
Fusing and floating away.
Pale worn gold like the settings of old jewels . . .
Mauve, exquisite, tremulous, and luminous purples,
And burning spires in aureoles of light
Like shimmering auras.

They are covering up the pushcarts . . .
Now all have gone save an old man with mirrors—
Little oval mirrors like tiny pools.
He shuffles up a darkened street
And the moon burnishes his mirrors till they shine like phosphorus. . . .
The moon like a skull,
Staring out of eyeless sockets at the old men trundling home the pushcarts.

ROBERT MUNGER

The Derelict

Thou grim, unburied corpse of wind and sea!
The lonely mid-most ocean's livid face
Shudders to feel, as on you drift apace,
How much o'erpassed, how multiplied by thee
Is its own loneliness; no depth could be
Too deep for your last sepulchre, a place
To hide forever all the ghostly trace
Of your mute witnessing of agony.
And when the moonless midnight holds you fast
And sea and utter gloom mingle and glide
Into each other's arms, her bosom vast,
Swelling to meet the darkness like a bride,
Almost might God himself start back aghast
At that black water lapping at your side.

HANIEL LONG

Song

Poppies paramour the girls;
  Lilies put the boys to bed;
Death is nothing else than this
  After everything is said.

They are safe and shall not fade,
  After everything is done,
Past the solace of the shade
  Or the rescue of the sun.

His Deaths

He bore the brunt of it so long
And carried it off with wine and song,
The neighbours paused and raised an eye
At hearing he had learned to die.

'Twas on a Friday that he died,
But Easter day his neighbours spied
His usual figure on the streets,
And one and all were white as sheets.

I died, said he, on Good Friday,
But someone rolled the stone away,

And I come back to you alive
To die tonight at half past five.

Monday at Babylon I fall,
And Tuesday on the Chinese Wall,
Wednesday I die on the Thracian plain,
And Thursday evening at Compiegne.

Saturday, Sunday, Monday too,
I die and come to life anew;
Neighbours like Thomas look and touch,
Amazed that I can live so much.

WALTER ADOLPHE ROBERTS

Villanelle of the Living Pan

Pan is not dead, but sleeping in the brake,
Hard by the blue of some Ægean shore.
Ah, flute to him, Beloved, he will wake.

Vine leaves have drifted o'er him, flake by flake,
And with dry laurel he is covered o'er.
Pan is not dead, but sleeping in the brake.

The music that his own cicadas make
Comes to him faintly, like forgotten lore.
Ah, flute to him, Beloved, he will wake.

Let not the enemies of Beauty take
Unction of soul that he can rise no more.
Pan is not dead, but sleeping in the brake,

Dreaming of one that for the goat god's sake
Shall pipe old tunes and worship as of yore.
Ah, flute to him, Beloved, he will wake.

So once again the Attic coast shall shake
With a cry greater than it heard before:
"Pan is not dead, but sleeping in the brake!"
Ah, flute to him, Beloved, he will wake.

JOHN FARRAR (1896—)

When Amaryllis Bowls

My Amaryllis was not made
Like ordinary souls!
The Milky Way's her bowling green,
She uses moons for bowls.

She swings them down the starry sward
Till all of Heaven wakes.
Oh! Truly she's no common girl—
She wins eternal stakes!

Magic

Turn apple blooms to silver,
Turn buttercups to gold?
That's a very common gift,
Age on ages old;

But when my Amaryllis smiles,
A half a second after,
Her Midas touch transmutes the world
From grumpiness to laughter!

THE END

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